



# Chapter 1

## Reborn in another world, as a pretty girl

When I woke up, there was nothing familiar surrounding me.

I was confused, but I had one idea.

I am a very imaginative person.

"...eh? Another world? Seriously?"

Yep, I am very imaginative, but hearing my voice say it, it's really nothing but foolish.

Wait, waitwaitwait, there was an even more important truth in my voice.

Exactly, my voice.

You want to know what's wrong with my voice?

My name is Arisugawa Akito

Eighteen years old.

I'm a student who moved to Tokyo just this spring to attend university.

To calm my nerves a bit, let me reminisce.

About what happened yesterday...

\*

Until I finished high school, while living out in the boonies, I entered a club, applied myself and lived an overall vigorous student life.

I'd played soccer since I was tiny and I spent a large part of my youth on it, too, but in the last tournament of my third year in highschool, we lost and I burnt out.

Afterwards, I buried it under studying, fulfilled the condition for leaving home by qualifying for a rather good university and began living alone.

Well, so far, everything was good.

But by that time, I was so burnt out you wouldn't believe for an eighteen-year-old. I couldn't get myself motivated to do a~nything anymore.

I only went to university for the opening ceremony.

Then I unquestionably turned into one of the enrolled students on the verge of becoming NEETs<sup>[1]</sup>.

But while I had no motivation, I certainly had more time that I could spend on my hands.

At that point, I encountered online games.

Creating new characters that would become extensions of myself, acting out a new self in virtual worlds was quite exhilarating.

In no time at all I was caught and played game after game, all month long, even cutting down on sleeping time.

University?

I never went.

Ah, sorry, the opening ceremony. I did go there.

Which is not to say that I have issues communicating with people.

It's just a bother, you see!

D-don't get the wrong idea, alright!

Well, not like any of that matters.

Anyway, I particularly liked fantasy-themed MMORPGs.

Fantasy.

That's good.

Since long ago I've liked reading books when I was tired, I loved submerging myself in my fantasies.

On nights with movies from Ghibli or so I could fantasize so much, I was all fluffy inside from happiness.

There may not be any Aetherium<sup>[2]</sup>, but I did float as I pleased inside my head, you know?

Right, I loved running through fantastic worlds.

As a new me, that is.

And like that, I wandered through many worlds as many characters and lived a fulfilled university life, but there I found one experiment I wanted to try.

——I want to try playing a girl.

It's alluring, right?

And, knowing how rude it is, don't you sometimes think you're better than a girl at acting like one? Meaning an ideal one, in the mind of a man like me.

Well, I had such a slight obsession with changing myself.

Creating personas?

So I decided.

I was going to become a girl cuter than anyone.

Then I searched for an appropriate online game and finally arrived at "New Life in Another World", a rather relaxed-seeming representative of its kind.

The name was unassuming, not going for an extreme impact or anything.

That's what I liked about it.

In that game, I was going to make my debut as a girl character.

I spent quite a bit of time on character creation.

There were all kinds of races, but to begin with I decided on a half between human and elf.

Age fifteen.

I wavered for a while over the hair color.

Two hours, maybe?

You can't go wrong with blond.

However, red is cool.

But pink is cute.

Blues are also cool and give good vibes.

Still, exactly because it's a fantasy world, going with black after all has a point, too.

I wavered.

I wavered and wavered and finally went with the other safe option, platinum blond.

In short, I picked silver hair.

Long, straight silver hair.

It was quite cool and I liked it.

The eyes were a bit slanted and had that strong-willed look.

I set their color to amber.

Just 160cm for height, and a slender, model-like figure.

Boobs are filled with dream, but for this character it felt excessive so I gave them a moderate size. Yep, my pickiness led to a good result..

With that I finished setting the appearance..

Time spent: ridiculous.

But you can say I managed to create the most beautiful girl I could.

Next came setting the character's attributes.

There was a large number of classes and I wavered again.

Just which one was appropriate for this beautiful girl?

Grabbing a sword and standing on the frontline was fascinating, but I decided to leave it for another time and wanted to pick a magic class after all.

Firepower or healing, that was the question.

Due to the strong-willed expression, it had to be firepower, right?

So it had to be a prodigiously offensive class.

I picked Mage and went on to spending the points.

No matter how I set them, I'd probably be able to get quite strong through leveling, but apparently the first points decided the direction the character would take.

I again wavered.

There were 5 attributes, and I could spend a total of 10 points to bring their values up to 5.

Strength, Endurance, Protection, Agility, Mind

I was to allocate the points in these five entries.

If I spent them equally, all would get to 2.

In short, it should be alright to think of 2 as the average.

3 was a bit superior.

4 was quite excellent

5 was genius-level.

Hmm.

I don't like being a jack of all trades.

So min-maxing it was!

Strength 0, Endurance 1, Protection 0, Agility 4, Mind 5.

That completely used the 10 points I had.

MUAHAHAHAHA.

Truly the defensive power of paper.

I was going to live on Agility and Mind - which was probably magic attack power – alone.

And, of course, beauty.

The next step was setting special abilities.

There I could get special abilities by allocating points, but I only had 3 this time.

There were a ton of options, but I decided on "Latent Potential", "Double Cast" and "Cast Time Reduction".

I'd already decided on min-maxing after all.

Nobody would be able to defend against my attacks!

...but if I didn't find someone to be my shield, and soon, wouldn't I die from one tackle from a slime?

Oh, well.

I could always use my Agility to dodge.

Finally, I finished all the trials and tribulations of creating this character.

I clicked "Next" and got a popup titled "Welcome to another world!"

"Do you believe in other worlds?"

YES NO

Hmm, that's a Yes, yes.

Because I'm a pure boy dreaming of other worlds.

Without wavering, I clicked YES.

"Then, have a nice life."



That was the last message.

I think.

I think, because at that point my consciousness stopped.

\*

Reminiscence Over.

"..."

Hmm.

I'm getting a very, very bad vibe here.

It's not a cheap trick like dreaming or hypnosis, definitely not.

This meadow I'm sitting on? The softness and smell are certainly natural.

In the first place, where is my one room apartment, my home and my castle?

I'm not half-asleep.

My vision is clear.

Nothing is blurry.

No problem.

Alright, I finally made my resolve to clear the issue that had given me my first doubts.

I readied myself and said something once more.

"Ahh. Test, test?"

... I heard an unbelievable lovely voice.

Coming from my throat.

I combed my hair that felt a bit odd.

Long. It was also glossy and smooth and silver.

...

I touched my chest.

They were moderate, but definitely filled with dream!

... I touched them again.

I-I'm not doing anything dirty, alright!?

This is important!

This is important!!

It's really important, so I repeated it.

There was an absence between my legs.

"...eh?"

EH?

Can you understand my despair right now?

Only barely did I manage to not fall unconscious again.

But I pulled myself together.

I got up.

My old height was 175cm.

"What's with this line of sight, so low..."

This is so weird.

...ahhh, yes, yes, I'm one-sixty, right. I know that.

I was just a bit negligent.

Furthermore, I also know something else.

No, I have no idea how to deal with it yet, but let's admit it:

"I became a woman..."

I only thought I'd play a girl, but it looks like I became one in another world.

1. ↑ NEET: acronym for Not in Education, Employment or Training
2. ↑ Aetherium: a stone that lets you float, from Castle in the Sky, a 1986 Studio Ghibli movie.

# Chapter 2

## Encounter

I am at a loss and there's nothing I can do about it.

No, actually I've been at a loss for a while now, but reality doesn't accommodate you just like that.

Reality meaning the reality of another world, that is.

After noticing I could see my own Status, for a start I did just that:

Name: Alice

Race: Halfelf

Age: 15

Gender: Female

Class: Apprentice Mage

Level: 1

Skill: None

Magic: None

It's true that I set the age to fifteen, but to think I'd really grow three years younger...

Well, I've changed gender, so that may be the least of my worries.

And the name, Alice, is just like I set it.

Alice, because it's so close to my last name Arisugawa.

The clear, nearby lake reflected my appearance.

A pretty girl just like I had made her.

I tried smiling a bit.

Crap, she's too cute.

I might fall for her.

Although it's me.

Didn't I make a slight mistake with the settings?

Are other worlds no fun after all unless you're a man?

...oh, well.

A more pressing issue is the entry on magic.

Magic: None

That's bad.

As a Level 1 Apprentice Mage, I should learn magic after leveling up a bit, but at least at the moment I had none.

Because everything's been true to my settings so far, chances are the Attributes will be the same, too.

In other words, hand-to-hand combat is impossible for this character.

And yet I can't use magic.

This is seriously bad.

My life's not gonna be in serious danger the moment I meet a monster around here, is it?

The moment I realized that, I got scared of being on that meadow.

Am I going to be fine around here, monster-wise?

In my early days, it's not going to be that unreasonable, right?

But because I couldn't see anyone around, I had no choice but to move on my own.

By the way, to see if I couldn't log out or something, I minutely checked my Status, loitered around a bit and spent some more time at a loss, like before.

... all for naught.

I'd seen that coming.

So, first I had to search for a town or so to survive.

Before making my move, I checked my equipment.

Weapon: None

Armor: Cloth Clothes

Accessory: None

Hey, aren't I really gonna die when a monster comes?

To warn myself, to not do anything reckless, I remembered my own Attributes.

Strength 0, Endurance 1, Protection 0, Agility 4, Mind 5

Like this, right?

No weapons, but Strength 0.

Only Cloth Clothes, but Endurance 1 and Protection 0.

Mind 5, but no magic to rely on.

Grml...

Agility.

I have to overcome this with Agility.

If I encounter a monster, I'm going to run away!

That decision in mind, I set out.

While fearfully walking around, something like a distant town came into view.

Looks like I'm on top of a hill right now, so I can easily see all around.

I call it a town, but it isn't that large.

Only a bit more developed than a village, I'd say.

However, even if I enter the town, I have neither money nor a place to stay. What's going to happen to me?

Furthermore.

Furthermore, you see?

Right now, I am the most perfectly beautiful girl I could imagine.

I checked it earlier, and I'm so lovely I could fall for myself.

Sleeping outdoors will be bad.

If I don't secure a place to sleep securely, it'll be bad.

This place definitely has worse public order than modern Japan, right?

I like the thought of getting attacked by a man even less than getting attacked by a monster.

That would be hell.

First, I have to find a way to defend myself.

In all kinds of meanings.

—but just before reaching the town, I finally encountered a monster!

Level 1 Petite Panther

Enemy Status, says the information popping up in my head.

But more importantly...

EHHH WHAT'S THIS SO CUTE!!

It's a puppy.

It's a perfect, mischievous puppy.

It's grown a little horn, but it's still a cute horn.

The fangs a bit sharp, but they're still cute fangs.

I'm a complete dog person, by the way.

I think had my apartment allowed pets, I totally would've kept a dog...

"Eh, woah!"

The cute puppy came charging at me with its horn.

I dodged it at the last second.

Hey, wait, puppy!

That was dangerous

What are you going to do if you stab me with that!

That's not funny!



"...sorry, puppy! I mustn't die in this place, either!"

I readied myself and decided to fight.

Before the puppy recovered its stance from the charge, I punched it.

As expected of my Agility.

With casual ease I hit the puppy.

Prod.

"..."

"..."

The puppy's big, round eyes met mine.

I almost got bitten for that.

"CRAA...!" I quickly dodged.

...ap, I definitely can't win this.

This is too powerless, right?

When my limit is prodding a puppy.

Arm strength that loses against a puppy? Come on!

What do I do? What do I do!

While I my thoughts were impatiently treading in circles, the puppy charged again.

Ah———crap.

I can't dodge that one.

One hit?

Am I going to die in one hit?

Protection 0 means paper, right?

I keep watching the events in slow motion, blinking not even once.

"Hng!"

Suddenly, a well-built uncle stepped between the puppy and me.

Why uncle, you ask?

Because I saw his dandy profile that made it clear he's that old!

Uncle stopped and repelled the puppy's charge with his shield and impaled it with his sword.

... doesn't make for a nice picture, does it.

With that, the puppy stopped moving and disappeared like fog.

I see, monsters disappear upon defeat.

That's way better than leaving behind corpses.

A drop item appeared.

Petite Panther's Fur

I wonder, can I just sell these and make my living that way?

Uncle specially picked it up and threw it to me.

"That was dangerous, Missy. A little Missy like you shouldn't loiter around outside town like that?"

Missy?

Ahh, he means me.

This dandy old man threw me a look over his shoulder and loosened his face into a broad grin.

"Y-yes. Thank you very much."

Alright, perfect yourself!

I originally intended to do so anyway, but now I'll show you what a great girl I can be!

I am a bit excited though.

Although there's nothing that could expose me. I'm not gonna be exposed, right?

"But... this is a surprise. Missy, are you an elf?"

"Eh...?"

Uncle made a surprised face after looking at me again.

Eh?

How did he notice I'm an elf?

I'm actually a halfelf though.

"No, I'm a halfelf."

"Hee..., I see I see. You're the cutest girl I've ever seen, so I thought you might be an elf, but I see."

Are elven looks that superior?

"I-is that so. Uhm, thank you very much. For saving me just now."

I'd been on the verge of death. No kidding.

"I told you, don't sweat it. We have to help each other in trouble, right? From the looks of it you're alone; don't you have a companion?"

Uncle answered me with a smile and worriedly looked around since I was alone.

I hadn't had a bad feeling about him in since the beginning, but now he seemed like a genuinely good guy.

Hmm, what should I do.

Mixing in a bit of the truth, I told him my situation.

"Actually, I left home. Uhm, I cannot ever go back, and without anywhere to go, either, I was wondering what to do... probably."

It's true.

I only omitted some details.

And whether I can ever go back or not needs some verification in the future.

Uncle listened to my story quietly.

"Missy, you said you're a halfelf, right... Elven villages are harsh in that respect. Must have been tough on you."

Uncle was moved to tears a bit.

And hey, elves are horrible, aren't they?!

Really elitist, huh.

"Ahh, nono, how should I put this."

But arbitrarily making the elves the bad guys didn't sit well with me either.

"It's fine, it's finy, Missy. Everyone's got a thing or two they don't want to remember!"

Yepyp, Uncle nodded.

What should I do, this person is a bottomless fountain of goodness.

"Still, I see. But it's no good if a missy like you has nowhere to go. Humans aren't all bad guys, either, but it must be tough to live on your own for a girl as ignorant of the world as you are, Missy."

Ignorant of the world, huh.

Is that how I look to you?

Well, I can't fight and I was alone outside of town.

And at least in this world it's true that I don't know left from right.

I got anxious after all.

Seeing my uneasy expression, Uncle gave me one, big nod.

"I'm Nicholl, an adventurer living in this town. I live with my wife and daughter, but if you like, why don't you stay with us, Missy? This must be some kind of fate. I can't just let you to the dogs like this."

"Eh!?"

Is this what they call a godsend?

Ignorant of the world as Uncle had called me and exhausted to boot, I nodded without hesitation.

It's too much trust in someone I just met, but he did save my life.

And more than anything, I really have no way to survive in this world, so I have to rely on someone.

For now.

"Uhm, it may cause you trouble, but please help me."

"Hahaha, that's no trouble. With someone like you at home, Missy, it'll be cheerful, and my daughter'll be happy for someone her age."

Uncle told me with a wry smile that she'd always been noisy about wanting a little sister.

"I... My name is Alice. Nicholl-san, really, thank you!!!"

When I smiled in relief from the bottom of my heart, Uncle got a bit agitated and flustered.

"O-Ouu! Let's go, Mis... Alice-chan!"

Like that, I took my first step living in another world.

# Chapter 3

## Rinnal

The town nearby is apparently called Rinnal.

It's a town flourishing due to the local specialty, a fruit called Rinnal, and has been named thus.

But what's a Rinnal?

And what language am I talking in in the first place?

By the way, after you introduce yourself and consent, you can apparently see each other's Status.

Not everything though.

Uncle's Status is as follows:

Name: Nicholl

Race: Human

Age: 41

Gender: Male

Class: Warrior

Level: 38

Uncle, isn't level 38 really strong?

I can't see information like Skills or Magic.

It's probably valuable information so you don't show it for just a self-introduction.

Let's remember that.



"Unc——Nicholl-san, you're strong, aren't you? Level 38 is amazing."

On the other hand, after seeing my Status, Uncle made a meek face again.

"Throwing a girl like this out is messed up."

What part of my Status is he talking about when he says "a girl like this"?

My age? My level?

After that, we entered while I noncommittally let Uncle's consolation wash past me.

There were some guard-looking people at the gate, but apparently everyone can enter.

They didn't say anything in particular to me.

They did stare though.

Hey, don't ogle a girl too much.

It's unpleasant.

All the way to Uncle's house, I was exposed to the stares.

The beauty I have poured all my effort into gathers too much attention.

This is tough.

"Honey, I'm home!"

Uncle opened the door and entered, and I followed him in.

"Hello."

"——!"

The moment I entered the house, my eyes met with the wife-ish person sitting at the living room table.

She looked at me, looked at Uncle, and looked at me again.

——Then her face turned demonic.

"AHHH!"

I reflexively screamed.

"...dear, just what's the meaning of this? You're not going to tell me you secretly saved up money and bought a slave, are you!!"

Slave?

You can buy slaves here? Hee, this really is another world.

"I-I didn't! Calm down! I ran into this girl when she was in trouble outside town and protected her!!"

Level 38 Uncle was shedding cold sweat as he explained.

Hmmmm.

Just now, level 38 seemed really weak.

I don't really have anything against him.

But now I do want to test if my attacks are weak or not.

"Ey!"

Prod, I hit Uncle in the gut.

For his age, I think he has tight abs.

By the way, as prod-dy as the hit was, I unmistakably hit him with my full power.

I looked up at Uncle, but it didn't look like the attack had done anything.

So it's no good after all.

Or is it?

Suddenly Uncle paled.

It worked?

But when I looked around, I found a demon.

Ahh, so that's how it is?

"Hee? So why did this girl resist you with all she has just now?"

Unable to reply anything to the demon's question, Uncle could only

shiver like a newborn, little deer.

"Uhm, so is he strong or weak now..."

No, it's not like I had anything against him.

Really.

After that, various heroic tales were shared, and when the misunderstanding was finally solved, Aunty was worried for me from the bottom of her heart.

She's a good person.

It seems she's called Adele.

I asked her to show me her Status.

Name: Adele

Race: Human

Age: 40

Gender: Female

Class: Tailor

Level: 21

Tailor means she makes clothes, right?

Which reminds me, when I came in, Aunty was been sewing at the table.

"Alice-chan, if you have any troubles, don't hesitate and tell us, ok? Feel free to think of this house as your home from now on."

"Ehm... I'm somewhat really sorry. I want to bother you as little as possible."

What's with the people in this world?

Are you saying that I was too sulky back in reality?

Or is this couple just special?

No, this couple must be special, right?

Isn't my greatest fortune bar none since coming to this world that I met this couple?

"Such a reserved girl, aren't you."

Modesty is a virtue, you know?

Uncle is knocked out on the sofa so I'm chatting with Aunty now.

"Uhm, I want to become an adventurer."

To earn money.

"Hmm... certainly, you are a Mage, although still an apprentice, Alice-chan. That should become your greatest strength when it comes to being an adventurer."

Mmmmm, Aunty was murmuring.

"Uhm, is there a problem?"

"Well, becoming an adventurer is open to anyone. For registration at

the guild, just pay 1000 Rook and you're good."

Hee, so the currency in this world is called Rook.

"But I'm worried if a girl like you wants to do such a dangerous job, Alice-chan."

Well, I think there all kinds of good professions, like Aunty here being a Tailor.

——Hooowever!

I'm finally in another world. How could I not adventure!?

Would that be allowed?

No, it wouldn't!

Well, I can't win against a puppy, though.

But the current situation is ultimately just that, current.

"...I, for a long time I've lived shut in a small place. I've longed for the outside world. I wanted to see so much, experience so much. Adventuring is my dream!"

It's not a lie, technically.

Small place = my one room apartment.

And I did long for my daydreams.

Alright, I didn't lie at all!

"Alice-chan..."

A tear rolled down Aunty's cheek.

Too easy.

"I understand. If you're that determined, I'm not going to stop you! But at least in the beginning, form a party with our daughter and keep to nearby places. That girl may be a bit mischievous, but her skills are excellent."

Hmmm?

Come to think of it, Uncle mentioned he has a daughter.

Aunty has started putting on a bit weight due to her age, but you can still see how pretty she was, and Uncle is eye candy for being in his middle ages.

Their daughter might be something to look forward to.

...nope, even if I look forward to it, nothing's going to happen, alright!!

Just who had to go and attempt playing a girl!

"Thank you very much. That would help me a lot."

"Sure, sure. Okay, I'm going to prepare an early dinner today, so eat something and take a good rest. My daughter will stay out late anyway."

She offered, so I took her up on it.

Dinner consisted of a pie made with the local specialty, rinnals.

I say rinnals, but they're apples! Apples!

So why are they called rinnals!?

By the way, it may be a fantasy world, but they have baths!

Baths made with cypress wood.

Well, I say cypress though I don't know what wood it's actually made of, but it's the best!

So I received a change of clothes from Aunty and entered the bathroom.

Bathroom.

The... bath?!

I looked down my body.

First of all, when I did that as a man, there were no bulging breasts.

But, while moderate, now they definitely held dreams!

"...c-calm down."

I'm no sex offender.

This is my body. Ultimately, this is my body!

And to get into the bath, I have to undress.

"What am I saying, of course I have to, come on..."



Ahaha, I laughed.

My voice was so lovely.

"...huu."

I steeled myself, took off all my clothes and got into the bath.

...while making sure to look as little as possible at myself.

"I'm no chicken, I'm no chicken, blubblub."

I talked into the bath water.

Eh? But I did wash my body before getting in?

Washing yourself before getting into the tub is good manners after all.

Yep, while looking as little as possible, I washed myself relying on sensation alone.

With a somewhat slimy liquid.

Well, it is some kind of soap or body lotion, I think.

Not something used for weird fetishes or so, right?

If it is, I'm going to stab Uncle in the gut some day.

I made that decision and just when I'd stood up to get out, the bathroom door was vigorously opened.

"———Ha?"

My thoughts stopped.

When people relax and something unexpected happens to them, they cannot react right away.

"Hee, you're Alice?"

An utterly stark-naked girl was standing in the door.

# Chapter 4

## Sisters

By the time I had caught my bearings again, the enemy had already invaded.

Without reserve she got into the bathtub I was standing in stock still.

HEEEEEYYYYYYYYY!

"Wash yourself before you get in the tub!"

Nono, is that really what I want to point out here?

I was considerably confused.

"Ehhh, that's such a bother. You're such a sheltered girl, Alice," she complained, but did reluctantly listen to me.

She was surprisingly docile.

Hmhhh, she happily hummed while washing herself.

Nono, what should I be doing in this situation?

Can I just remain a scarecrow?

"E-excuse me...?"

"Oh, I?"

I succinctly nodded.

"I'm the daughter of the house. Name's Shion. Nice to meet you, Alice."

"Haa... it's a pleasure to meet you. ...that's a cool name you have."

Well, I really did think so.

"Right? My stupid pops entrusted his dreams of adventure to me~. Come on, is that really how you name a girl?"

Say what she might, Shion-san isn't as unhappy over it as she would make me believe, either.

Like Uncle and Aunty, she has chestnut-colored hair.

It's cut short, but she has a pretty face and doesn't look particularly boyish.

And.

Her breast are huge!!

What the hell.

Just how much dream did she cram in there?

Did she spend bonus points?

"Hey, Alice, don't be standing there and wash my back, ok?"

"Why do I...," I set on, but obediently did as she asked.

I'm a freeloader.

That must not be forgotten.

"Haa~. Still, Alice, I'm amazed how beautiful you are. Are all elves like that? I've never seen silver hair," Shion-san voiced her impressions as she took a long, hard look at me after we got out of the tub.

For some reason I don't understand, I felt strangely embarrassed and hid my body by hugging myself.

And let me make this clear: This was not a ploy to show off my body!

I was fundamentally embarrassed!

"Ehm... I wonder?"

I've never seen an elf in my life.

As for myself, it's all due to my character creation, the hand of god so to speak.

"You're so sheltered~," Shion-san smiled broadly as I bashfully moved closer.

While putting on an indifferent front, I sat down behind her.

I took a wet towel and washed her back with gentle rubs.

"Hya!"

"Hii!"

Shion-san first yelped and, surprised, I followed suit.

"That tickles, Alice. Put more strength behind it!"

Hmm,

I thought she was about to report me.

Even at the best of times, this situation is dizzying.

I really wish she wouldn't surprise me any more.

"But if I scrub too hard, it's bad for your skin. It would be a waste, you're so pretty, Shion-san."

Eh?

Was this the place for such a line?

My role...

Am I really into my role here?

"D-don't be stupid! Uhh... you're so cheeky, Alice!"

Shion-san looks so cute when she puffs up her cheeks!

Thanks to that, my racing heart slowed just a bit, too.

Disperse, worldly desires!

...

Eh?

Did my current self just have worldly desires?

"... I don't! I mean, I'm a girl..."

I'm super-down now.

Shion-san got worried about me as I started murmuring behind her.

The next day.

Without wasting a moment, I headed out to adventure with Shion-san. First we stopped in the town to get me equipment.

By the way, Shion-san's Status is as follows:

Name: Shion

Race: Human

Age: 17

Gender: Female

Class: Swordsman

Level: 14

Hee~

Is it the wisdom of age? Uncle's level is higher.

Well, he certainly has the abs to match.

Anyway, as a Swordsman, Shion-san fights on the frontline.

Although from the looks of her light armor, she's not a tank.

"Alice, you're a mage, aren't you? Then you can just get your armor from mom."

"Eh? So Tailors really make those?"

"Yeah. By the way, Pops told me to teach you the ropes because of how little you know of the world."

Uncle, good job!

His gentleness is really touching.

"Basically, if you go to any weapons or armor store, you can find mass-produced goods. But to get some of good quality or a one-off item, you have to directly rely on a Smith or Tailor."

One-off!

That's such a nice term.

Personal! Personal is good!

"And, since I'm a Swordsman, I often rely on a Smith for my weapons and armor, but for someone like you, Alice, you get your armor from a Tailor. If it's too heavy, you can't equip it, right? Metal-made stuff or the like."

"Uhhhm."

When they call me that feeble, it hurts the male heart that I have left.



Along the way to the weapon store, I looked all around me.

In the garden of some private house, I found some firewood and an axe to chop it.

"Just wait and see, Shion-san."

"Hey... you are dynamic for the strangest things, Alice."

Seeming to have caught on to what I had found and what I was about to do, she followed me with a sigh.

After getting into the garden, I laid my hands on the axe.

"Unnng!"

"..."

Just from me picking up the axe, Shion-san gave me worried looks!

My Streeength!

I hate my Strength 0!!

But I'm still a former man!

This sensation is deeply carved into my being, I don't forget it so easily!

I'm not some town chick.

Right, back at home I've chopped wood!

"Uuhhhhhnnnn!"

With my arms trembling like a leaf I lifted the axe.

I lowered my hips and took a stance to easily apply my strength.

I tightened my body.

Imagining one rod going through my body, I focused on my trunk.

Right, you don't just swing your arms!

Without using your whole body, you can't split the log!

I finished the preparations and took aim.

"Haaaaah!

Mustering all my strength, I raised the axe above my head and, using the strength of my whole body, swung it at my target.

Thump.

It penetrated for about 10cm.

It went 10cm?

It did, right?

10cm... just what effect did my strength make?

Isn't this just from the weight of the falling axe alone?

"..."

"..."

I gently put the axe back and met Shion-san's eyes.

"What do you think?"

"Yeah... I knew this was gonna happen."

Tehe, so she knew.

After being recognized as feeble and having my male pride shattered into pieces like that, I quietly followed Shion-san to the weapons store.

The house and garden earlier belonged to an acquaintance of Shion-san's so it was settled with an explanation.

Yes.

"A rod, right. Anything else is impossible."

"Yes, I think you're right."

I've become an obedient Alice.

Let's admit it, I have no strength.

But you'll learn sooner rather than later!

I have the world's greatest firepower!

...probably.

"First of all, your first equipment will be a present from me. You're like a little sister to me after all."

"Shion-san..."

In this other world, I got an Onee-chan!

Accompanied by Shion-san, I looked through the equipment in the shop's corner with the rods.

Rod: 100 Rook

Flame Rod: 1000 Rook

Ice Rod: 1000 Rook

Lightning Rod: 1000 Rook

That's the selection of rods the weapon store in this town has.

As Shion-san said, they're mass-produced and lack both a particular quality or inscription.

"Okay, this Rod, then."

"Whyyy are you that reserved? Make it an elemental rod! You're flimsy so you at least need a proper weapon!"

Shion told me off and put the Rod back onto the shelf.

Hmm...

Is she going to be alright?

I don't have a clear grasp of the price level yet, but 1000 Rook seems expensive...

"Don't be so reserved, Alice. Forget that I said you're like a little sister to me, you are my little sister. At least be a little bit selfish!"

Shion-san smiled at me. That smile really reminds of her dad.

Crap, that struck home.

The tears I had held back were coming through.

"Uhh... some dust got in my eye..."

"What are getting all shy for, idiot~."

Shion-san petted my head.

I resisted, but she just went on and tuzzled my hair.

After messing around for a while, I looked straight at Shion-san and said my thanks.

As well as that word.

"Thank you, Onee-chan!"

For some reason that made Shion-san all agitated and flustered.

I've seen that reaction before, but where...

As for the equipment, in the end I had her buy me a Lightning Rod.

And then we went home once and I got a Leather Robe (with Inscription) from Aunty.

Amazingly, it's high quality!

I equipped everything and finally we went out to adventure.

Currently my equipment is as follows:

Weapon: Lightning Rod

Armor: Leather Robe (high quality)(Inscription: Adele)

Accessory: None

Alright, this time I'm sure I can win even against a puppy!

... I hope.

# Chapter 5

## To take a life

Shion-san and I decided to leave the town and head for a ruin in the forest beyond the hill I had first arrived on.

Oh my god!

I'm so excited!

"Onee-chan, is there a demon king in the ruin? If I defeat him, I'll be a hero! What should I do!?"

"Seeing how you can't chop wood, why don't you worry about that later?"

So what!

I don't plan to rely on the strength in my arms!

"We're about to leave the town, so let's form a party now."

"Hm? Party?"

Doesn't forming a party mean heading out together, like we are now?

Shion-san laughed at my usual clueless face.

"There is an Invite entry in the Status, right? You can invite people

into your party with that, forming a group of up to six."

"Hee~~"

However, being able to see your Status and requesting to join parties, it's like I'm in a game. But it is another world after all, right?

Hm?

Or is this a game? A dream?

Uhhhm.

... I guess I should make sure.

That being said, but how do I actually go about that?

For now I can say I get hungry and sleepy.

The five senses are perfectly recreated, too.

Compared to before I was reborn, nothing feels off about my body, either.

...

Well, of course there is a difference.

An extraordinary difference, the one between being a man and a woman.

Probably never before in my life have I been embarrassed to go to the toilet.

And while the standard of living might be higher in modern Japan, it's not that bad here.

I can see that an original culture has developed here.

It's probably too creative to come up in a dream of mine.

Actually, I'm on the verge of admitting I was reborn into another world.



Just.

If I am to fight with monsters, there is one thing I have to make sure of.

That is———damage.

If there are the Status and parties, will the attacks I take from monsters be converted into damage?

In other words, is there pain?

Or is there not?

Will simply a value such as HP go down?

Was there such a value in the Status?

And this is important

Ignoring games for now, can I fight in this reality where my life depends on it? I'm not used to pain.

"... this is the one thing I didn't want to do."

But I still have to do it, before leaving the town.

I looked around and found what I was looking for.

And then I picked that up —— a pebbly lying at a street corner.

A round pebbly of good size, fitting onto the palm of my hand.

...here I go!

"Come... on!! ~~~~!"

I smashed the pebble against my head with all my strength.

"Haaa!?"

Shion-san was shocked by my cryptic action.

Seeing stars is probably a good expression for me right now.

Fuhh...

"OOWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWW! OUCHOUCHOUCH!"

I was rolling over the floor in pain.

This hurts, this freaking hurts!

A dream!?

A game!?

HAHAHAHA!

Fine, I'll admit it.

It doesn't matter anymore what this is.

No matter what, this can only be reality.

I mean it hurts!

It hurts so much I'm crying!!!

"Wai, Alice!? Are you alright!?"

Well... certainly it hurts to smash a pebble against your head.

That goes without saying.

But does it hurt this much?

Is that it?

Does it want to say I'm paper?

Does it want to say I'm freaking tofu with Protection 0?

But I'm a maiden, not tofu...

Anyway, the pain finally subsided and I got up straight.

Verification over.

"... with that out of the way, let's go, Onee-chan."

"Eh? Ah, okay... wait, Alice... is everything alright with your head?"

What exactly do you mean with that, Onee-chan?

...I may have lost more than I thought.

For a while Shion-san gave me lukewarm looks, but that was alright.

After an invitation from Shion-san, the two of us formed a pair party.

Pair hunting!

So nice!

"At first we're going to fight near the town, and once you're used to it, we'll head to the ruins. But since it's meaningless for me to do too much, the fighting will be done mainly by you."

"You're not going to abandon me, are you?"

"You'll be fine, you'll be fine."

Really?

Shion-san, do you properly realize I'm weaker than a puppy?

It's inattentiveness like "That little poses no problem" that leads to great accidents!

"And Alice, don't form parties with just anyone, you hear me? If it's not with people you can trust, or where you won't regret it even if they betray you, it's dangerous."

"Is that so?"

"Fundamentally, money and experience are shared equally between party members, but that doesn't work with drop items. Especially when you find a rare item, it's easy to be stabbed in the back."

"Scary!"

Other worlds are scary!

Is this one of those cases?

Where you're not protected by the law?

Self-responsibility?

"That's why I show my Status to people I decide to party with, without hiding anything. As a sign of trust."

Shion-san showed me her Status up to the details.

Weapon: Eastern Sword (high quality)(Inscription: Izanagi)

Armor: Light Plate (high quality)(Inscription: Kalon)

Accessory: Gale Earring

Skill: Slash

"Onee-chan, that looks really strong!"

"Well, getting your equipment in order is basic for adventurers."

Shion-san said that it wasn't actually that good, but she probably went through a lot of trouble to gather it.

Shion is great because she still doesn't boast!

"I'm going to show you my Attributes, too."

So you can see Attributes, too?

I never knew.

And Shion-san's Attributes are as follows:

Strength 3, Endurance 1, Protection 1, Agility 5, Mind 0

"...Onee-chan, that's so unbalanced."

Seriously!!

Is it okay to have Endurance and Protection both at 1?

"Well, who cares, as long as it doesn't hit me."

Are you like that?

Are you like that red guy, Onee-chan!?<sup>[1]</sup>

But Agility 5, huh.

There was a genius this close to me.

Frankly, I thought I wouldn't find anyone to beat my 4 Agility for a while.

"Onee-chan... now I'm a little bit worried how reliable you really are..."

"Ehh!? What are your Attributes, then?"

"Very well! Feast your eyes, they're amazing!"

Strength 0, Endurance 1, Protection 0, Agility 4, Mind 5

"Hehe!"

"Feeble..."

"That!?"

There is another part that begs even more attention, isn't there!?

"Ehm, Mind 5 might be amazing, but it just doesn't click for me. Well, the 4 in Agility is a bit surprising though."

Well, I haven't properly experienced its amazingness myself yet, so I

can't help you there.

"But the 0, 1, 0 is even more of a surprise..."

That's the result?

... I don't even know what you're talking about!

After exchanging the necessary information, we left the town.

From now on, puppies might attack us any time.

Full of vigilance, I looked left and right while carefully making step after step.

Because I was too much of a tortoise, Onee-chan started dragging me along by my neck midway.

"I'm no luggage~!"

"But you're light. Are you eating properly?"

"I've eaten four plates of curry before!"

"Curry?"

Eh?

Curry. Is it not getting translated? I can pronounce it, though.

"It's a food served in bowls, and I've eaten four servings."

"Hee. Just where does all of that fit into your body, hmm?"

"Hehe, are you impressed?"

That's the appetite of a growing boy, hungry after club activities!

"So, how much did you eat yesterday?"

"Rinnal pie, one slice. That's all that fit."

"..."

"..."

She's totally thinking I lied!!

I didn't, but I have no way to prove it!

"Oh? Hey, we have our first customer!"

"Wah!"

A push from Shion-san made me land on the ground.

And before me...

Petite Panther Level 2 has appeared!

Enemy Status confirmed!

Oh!?

So you're here~...

Eh?

Isn't it level 2?



Did I see something wrongly?

"O-Oneechan, leve, enemy!"

"Oh, its level? They fluctuate a bit. Even in the same place."

I haven't heard any of this!?

"Well, you'll manage."

So easygoing!

And why are energetically sitting down over there!?

Are you just watching?

You have no intention whatsoever of helping me, huh!?

"Woah!!"

The level 2 puppy didn't wait for my trembling to settle down.

Of course he didn't!

With my inherent agility, I somehow managed to get past its initial attack.

Alright, bring it on!

I'm also a (former) man!

In my heart, I'm still a man!

That means there are some battles I have to fight!

I held the Lightning Rod before me and carefully closed the distance.

Maybe the level 2 puppy had noticed I'm not the me of the past, because it carefully watched me.

Wait, the one in the past had been impaled by Uncle.

"Here I come!"

With a nimble movement, I smashed the Lightning Rod into the puppy.

"Squeek!"

"Ah, sorry! ——cra!!"

The moment I was inattentive due to pangs of conscience, I almost got bitten for it.

This is dangerous!

Because with the earlier verification I've bitterly experienced how painful such a bite would be!

"What are you doing..."

I could hear Shion say something behind me.

But I ignore her!

Nng, after all fighting for life and death is severe.

This is the law of survival of the fittest.

This is what it means to be an adventurer.

Anybody who doesn't like it can just become a tailor or a smith in town.

But I...

"I have decided already..."

I'm going to live in this world.

I am going to adventure in this world.

Rather than confining myself to my small room, I really think this world is better!

"Haaahhhh!"

After dodging an attack, I hit the puppy with all my might.

At that moment, the Lightning Rod gleamed and lightning washed over the puppy.

It gave one last twitch and stopped moving.

"..."

The puppy dissolved into the world and a Petite Panther's Fur appeared in its place.

A drop of something wetted the fur.

"... Alice, are you sure you can do this?"

"... I ... can."

I've already stained my hands with blood.

If I pulled back here, I would never be able to apologize to the puppy.

My resolve is hard.

But the tears just don't stop.

"Wuaaaaaaahhhhh!"

On that day.

I chose to live by taking lives.

1. <sup>↑</sup> Red guy: Gundam reference, to Char Aznable. "Who cares, as long as it doesn't hit me/us," is a catch phrase of his.

# Chapter 6

## The Ruins in the Forest

Level 3 Woodrobin

After I took my first life, Shion-san and I headed towards the ruins while fighting monsters.

"Hah!"

Inside the forest, the encounter rate was quite high.

I've already lost count.

Shion-san lightly attacked to draw aggro and I was to finish off the monsters.

Drawing aggro means becoming the enemy's target of attack, but, well, if you think about it as the enemy basically going after the most threatening target, it's not too far off.

I mean, currently I cannot really fight.

And this opponent called Woodrobin?

It shoots freaking arrows!

It's a monster, so why does it carry weapons!?

Using branch arms it grew from its stump, this stump held bow and arrows of self-made(?) wood.

Frankly speaking, it's more scary than anything.

In my world, projectile weaponry is the strongest, you know?

Don't bring swords to gun fights.

However.

However!

My Onee-chan made absolutely no issue out of the projectile weapons.

Even now she was lightly twisting her upper body, dodging the arrows.

Shion-san answered my question why she could do that so easily with:

"Eh? If you see their posture, you just have to see through where they're aiming and dodge, right?"

I have no idea what she's talking about.

For example, let's assume that in my world, someone from the mafia or the yakuza aims a gun at you.

It's a gun, so of course it can only shoot straight.

Well, I don't know about people like that guy with the thick eyebrows shooting in G-lines, but still.

Anyway, once you know where the gun is aimed, you only have to sidestep the bullet the moment the trigger is pulled.

That's her claim.

"Agility 5, huh."

I feel like I've caught a glimpse of something tremendous.

"Alice, don't space out!"

"Y-yes!"

In a rush, I circled behind the stump and attacked it with the Lightning Rod.

In about one out of five hits, the lightning strike happens.

This time, I got the lightning strike on the first hit and successfully defeated the stump.

"Fuh..."

In all likelihood, I think a Lightning Rod of a better quality will cause lightning strikes with a higher probability.

Weapons are important.

For drop items, there was a medicinal plant, so I picked it up.

Then I diligently, warily turned around.

"Hoh~? You think I'd stab you in the back? Is that it what it says? Your attitude?"

Shion-san smoothly laid a hand on her Eastern Sword (high quality) and smiled darkly at me.

"C-come on! I'm just putting your teachings about adventuring to practice, right?"

Well, let's not mess around too much.

Even the best of friends need proper respect.

"Oh, well. It's time to go home for the day."

"Eh? But we haven't gone to the ruins yet?"

Seeing as we had just entered the forest with them, the ruins themselves were nowhere to be seen.

"It's fine. Besides, no reason to hurry, is there?"

"I can still go on."

"No, you can't."

"Why? The sun's not going down, either."

Shion-san looked at me and sighed greatly.

"Anyone would agree with me if they so much as looked at you."

"..."



Actually, after my crying fit, Shion-san tried to stop our outing and we only got this far because I had obstinately refused.

That made rejecting her concerns now all the harder.

"... alright."

Like this, Shion-san's and my first day of adventuring came to an end.

The enemies we encountered on the meadow on the way back were wordlessly cut down by Shion-san.

I came home, had dinner, took a bath and huddled on the bed in the room (my own one!) that Auntie had prepared for me.

To put it clearly, I was down.

I still couldn't forget the sensation in my hand.

"If only I could use magic, I wouldn't get this sensation..."

No, that's not quite right.

Without this sensation, it would feel like a game where pushing one button sends out missiles and ends the war.

I'm sure what I'm feeling right now is important.

As harsh as it is for someone from modern Japan like me.

At that point, I noticed I hadn't checked the fruits of the day's efforts.

I looked at my Status.

Name: Alice  
Race: Halfelf  
Age: 15  
Gender: Female  
Class: Apprentice Mage  
Level: 4

Oh?

Level 4?

It went up that much?

I didn't notice at all.

Skill: None  
Magic: Can choose initial magic

"...eh?"

Magic: Can choose initial magic

I reflexively did a double-take.

I... can use magic?

While reigning in my impatience, I selected the entry called Magic Settings.

Fire  
Blizzard

Thunder

Looks like I have to choose one of the three.

I see. Interesting!

If I'm right, then Mages in this world are specialized.

So, which do I pick?

But while I ask myself that, actually I've already made my decision.

Thunder

That's the one.

Why?

Because I like it.

That's it.

Got a problem?

Anyhow, with this I've set my initial magic and can use Thunder now.

I should.

"I wanna try it out..."

I think I'm a very self-centered person.

A fire was lit inside my heart that was down until a moment ago.

At times like this, I'm the type that can't stay still.

I changed from my house clothes into my equipment and sneakily left

my room.

Light leaked out of Shion-san's room.

I quietly moved past it.

Uncle was in the living room.

"Mm? Alice-chan? ... what's with that getup?

Uncle was clearly suspicious of my outfit.

...nggg, so you're getting in my way, Uncle?

Like I'll let you!

"Nichol-san."

"Yes?"

"Please be silent and let me pass."

"Well, I can't do that, can I? I think as you are now, you shouldn't go outside. Besides, the sun's gone down."

Hey, now's not the time for disputes like this!

If Shion-san finds me, it's all over!

I'm just no match for her!

"...please let me pass."

"I can't."

"...Dad."

Uncle. Twitched.

"Please let me pass, Dad. In silence, right now."

"..."

"Otherwise, I'll never think of you as Dad ever again."

"Please go."

Uncle was weirdly stiff about it, but he opened the way.

Too easy.

After getting out of the house, it had really gotten pitch dark.

There are kind of street lights, but regretfully not that many.

By the way, the illumination used in street lights and homes are not lamps, but special, magic crystals.

Anyhow, there are too few of them so they can't banish the darkness.

It's completely different from modern Japan.

Well, on the other hand the stars and the moons (moons?) seem all the brighter for it.

"I can already cross the meadow... wonder if I can get to the ruins?"

I do think this is foolhardy.

Have I just made a normal decision, or have I not?

Only the people around me can answer that.

But I stealthily left the town.

I left the town, arbitrarily shook off the enemies I encountered on the meadow and reached the forest.

My night vision is surprisingly good.

Even with moonlight alone, it's rather bright... is the feeling I get.

No, I can see too well.

I'm seeing too well here.

"Elven eyes?"

Otherwise, the difference to the night vision I've had so far is too big.

Well, I'm only a halfelf though.

But like this, I can also guarantee my vision even inside the forest.

Nobody should catch me unprepared and I'm also not going to flail around, no idea what I'm doing.

————— is what I thought at some point.

"Uhhhm, where am I?"

Shortly after entering the forest.

I lost my way.

I've taken the forest too lightly.

Being able to see, not being able to see, nothing of that matters.

Don't underestimate nature.

In the first place, I only heard that the ruins are in the forest, so how did I hope to actually find them?

If you act on an impulse, nothing good's gonna come of it.

In the first place, if you can see but lose your way, what's to stop you from going in circles in the same place?

From what I've heard, if you get lost in a deep forest, you can't walk straight for even twenty meters.

"Uhhhm."

Knowledge for when you're lost, number 1.

Method: Left Hand Rule.

If you stick with your left hand to the trees on the left side of the path and move forward, you'll eventually get out of the forest.

"But I refuse!"

I mean, what if I try to touch a tree in this darkness and my hand hits a hairy caterpillar or so?

It's impossible!

Number 2.

Method: Trémaux's Algorithm

Mark the ways you've gone, exploring all possibilities until you're out.

I can make marks in the ground with my rod.

However!

"I don't have the endurance for it!"

Damn my Endurance 1!

But this is a problem.

I don't run into many enemies, but it's a problem.

Oh, the urban legend that monsters grow more active at night is probably a lie.

They're sleeping. Look, the Woodrobin over there.

Now, let sleeping dogs lie, yes.

I randomly walked through the pitch dark, silent forest.

I've grown up in the boonies, so this darkness doesn't freak me out.

Furthermore, I have this night vision.

It's not that scary.

But I wonder how far I've walked.

By the time another fear, Shion-san's gonna kill me come sunrise, started going through my head, I finally saw them.

"Ruins... found!"



In a place so open I thought I'd left the forest for a moment stood a worn-down structure.

... by the way, my first objective was coming to the ruins, was it?

Well, fine.

# Chapter 7

## Magic

At first I walked around the ruins in something like a sightseeing mood.

I like ruins.

They're romantic

Be it ancient Japanese burial mounds, the Great Wall of China, Machu Picchu, I'd wanted to make a tour around the world to all those relics of history.

So I think I'll use this other world and tour ruins as much as I like.

"Hmm? So it's not that big..."

When I tried it, going around it once took about five minutes.

Five minutes by foot.

Because my pace was slow-ish while taking a closer look, its out circumference is probably around 250 meters.

Roughly the same as the 200 meters track around a sports field?

I'd intended to make sure of the scale before going in, but at this size, I'm not going to get lost, am I?

I can do this... I think.

If it gets dangerous, I can just fall back immediately.

Can I really say 'Nahhh, better not' after coming all this way?

"Hehee, unfortunately, I'm no coward!"

Unfortunately, huh...

Pushed by my baseless confidence, I came to the magic circle at what I assume to be the ruins' front side.

I wonder, do they use magic crystals for magic circles?

The one before me is shining faintly.

Is this the entrance?

Since I haven't seen something like a physical entrance into the inside of the ruins, thinking so is natural.

For another world.

I'm sure I'm going to be teleported into the ruins from here.

...yeah, I'm going to be alright, aren't I?

It's not a trap, is it?

I'm not going to burn in the flames of hell the moment I step into the magic circle?

After getting so far, I'd lost a bit of my nerve, but I nevertheless softly stepped into the circle.

It only gently shone.

Phew, it didn't suddenly flare up bright enough to destroy my eyes.

And while I thought that, I stopped being able to see the scenery outside the circle.

I was surrounded by a wall of fleeting, white light, but after a few seconds it died down.

The scenery outside... has completely changed.

I'm inside now.

Is the wall itself out of magic crystal? It's shining in a light green.

Be that as it may, I'm clearly inside the ruins.

"Fantasy indeed..."

Really impressive.

I left the magic circle and checked my surroundings.

There didn't seem to be anything but the magic circle in the room.

I was interested where the corridor led that was visible through the room's one exit.

I carefully stuck my head through the doorway and checked the corridor in both directions.

Right, dead end.

Left, Mister Bear.

"....."

Hm?

Let's check this once more.

Right... the corridor ends right there.

Left... Mister Bear, even closer than before.

Level 10 Ruin Bear

The Enemy Status popped up inside my head.

"Waaaiii! Level 10!?"

I had already drawn aggro and Mister Bear was charging down the narrow corridor.

CRAPCRAPCRAPCRAP!!

What kind of horror movie is this!

A disaster movie is nothing in comparison!

I can't think any human would think of fighting that Mister Bear if it came charging at them while slinging drool left and right.

No objections allowed!

So, time for a tactical retreat.

I hurried back into the room and quickly got onto the magic circle.

——but nothing happened.

"I really didn't want such jokes right NOOOOOOW!!!!!"

What's with this piece-of-junk magic circle, did it break!?

What!?

What's going on here!?

... don't tell me!

Entrance and exit are not the same!?

To get out of here, I have to find the exit magic circle, is that it!?

"Grrrrr."

Mister Bear quietly planted himself in the exit.

Now I had no way to leave or fall back, my last stand was complete.

For an instant I considered playing dead.

But if I do that, I might very well really die, so let's not try.

While shedding cold sweat, I grasped my Lightning Rod.

If I hit the bear with this thing's lightning strike, even it shouldn't come out unscathed.

I'd slip past that front paw and hit him.

I can do it, I can do it.

I just need to tell myself that.

Concentrate.

Probably, one hit will result in instant death.

Even if it's only knowledge from modern Japan, but I've heard that, for example, an Asian black bear can pulverize a horse's or cow's neck with one hit from its front paws.

Or that some famous martial artist, when asked if he could defeat a bear, had laughed and declared that it was impossible for humans to do.

I dare say he was right!

Sweat ran down my cheek.

The bear planted himself before its prey.

I-is this the imposing, bipedal stance bears are famous for?

Being treated to it in person, no way to deal with bears came to mind, nothing at all.

Anyhow, I need to take the initiative!

That's everything!

Right, I'm going to read the opponent's attack like Shion-san.

I stopped even breathing and waited for that moment.

The bear's center of balance shifted... I think.

In the next moment, its forepaws came rushing down at me.

"———!!"

Since I had sensed the preparatory movements, I evaded by a hair's breadth by letting myself fall down before stepping up to the bear.

"Please!!"

I smashed Lightning Rod into bear belly.

A flash came from the rod's magic crystal.

The lightning strike succeeded!!

Being so close to the bear was scary, so I immediately backed away.

I backed away and prayingly looked at the bear.

"Grrr"

Mister Bear, going strong!

There seems to be some damage, but it's nothing fatal.

It's looking at me with some wariness.

——to be honest: I'm on the verge of despair.

By chance, my first attack triggered the lightning strike, but to trigger another one, I need an average of five more hits.

That's probably impossible.

Slipping past its attack five times and attacking... is probably impossible.

Why did I come to this place in the first place again?

What had I gotten excited for and come to the ruins alone?

Even if I said I could use magic, that's no reason to come in here before testing it.

I've certainly been a bit too excited.

"... use it?"

Could I even use it?

Although I was too cornered to rely on it?

However, originally my goal has not been coming to the ruins, but to test my magic.

Alright, I'm going to show it here and now.

Or rather, I've got no other choice.

The time for crying has passed.

Do it if you don't want to die!

In my head, I imagined my Status and the use of magic.

I understood the necessary information.



Thunder: 10s cast time, 10s cooldown

Well, at the moment the cooldown doesn't matter.

If it takes ten seconds to cast, one shot is all I have.

(Thunder, activate)

I willed, and waited.

Countdown, 10

Along with the beginning of the cast time, my body got hot.

The bear began signs of attacking again.

It slowly but steadily closed the distance.

Without any rash movements, I matched its advance and fell back until I couldn't anymore.

My back touched the wall.

The bear moved even closer.

I didn't want to enter its space until the last possible second.

Along the wall, I fled into a corner.

The corner furthest away from the door.

I genuinely had nowhere left to run.

Slowly the bear came closer to end it.

Then it could reach.

It was in range.

The bear's center of gravity lowered.

Count, 5

Maybe it was due to the mana, but my body was lightly glowing.

The bear threw himself on me.

I somehow let myself fall on my backside and let the charge pass over my head.

I hadn't aimed for it, but the corner was too small for the bear to bring its arms to use well.

That's why the bear came biting at me with its boasted fangs.

I thrust the Lightning Rod into its snout and somehow or other kept it in check.

However, our strength was too different.

It tore the rod from my hands with its brutal strength alone.

With this, I was completely checkmated.

With a bite, it could take my head right off.

I thrust both my hands at the bear.

———I could do this!

Count, 0!

"Split the heavens and become a ray of light, to strike my enemies  
——— Thunder!!!"

Radiant lightning pierced the bear's body.

Threads of lightning discharging streamers into the floor, electrifying it.

Like time had stopped, the bear and I remained still.

I had felt the spell connect.

Slowly, the bear's eyes turned inside out and drool dripped from its mouth.

And still, the bear loomed over me.

"Hii!?"

Is it impossible?

Is it impossible with my level 4 magic?

I even shouted that super-embarrassing chant as it came to mind!  
This is too much!

My eyes turned teary, and I closed them

".....?"

When the bear didn't bite me no matter how much time passed, I squinted my eyes open, but it was nowhere to be seen.

Instead, a drop item had fallen down.

———Bear Ears

"And what should I do with this?"

I picked up the Bear Ears, puzzled.

They were rather fluffy.

... hmm, am I gonna make it to the exit?

# Chapter 8

## Bonds

After fighting my way through the life-and-death struggle with the bear, I first of all decided to make a few experiments with my lifeline, magic.

So now I'm still in the same room, sitting on the floor and thinking carefully.

Knowing yourself is important.

First, there's simply the power.

You can say that the results allow me to have quite high hopes in that regard.

The magic of level 4 me has felled the level 10 bear in one strike.

Well, I also hit the bear with a lightning strike from the Lightning Rod, so another test is required to see if one strike really is enough though.

One strike, or not.

If I am to fight alone, that difference is huge.

I can't think that the Lightning Rod's lightning strikes are more powerful than my Thunder, so I can defeat bears with two strikes at most, but there's a trap in the cast time and the cooldown.

Thunder: 10s cast time, 10s cooldown.

If acting in a party, those time windows shouldn't cause problems.

Of course, that assumes the party has someone holding up the frontline.

"Without a tank, the backline can't shine...?"

The firepower is plenty though.

So, does a Mage require a party after all?

For argument's sake, let's assume I hadn't put my leftover Attribute points into Agility, but had gone for Endurance 2 and Protection 3.

Would I have survived my run-in with the bear?

Endurance 2 is average.

Protection 3 is good.

And since I can't change Mind 5, Agility would be 0.

With that setup, I cannot expect to slip past the earlier paw attacks like I had.

So would I have taken the attack and survive?

"An attack from those paws that pulverize horse and cow necks?"

That's probably impossible.

The level difference was too big, too.

So, should I have gone full-out with Protection 5?

That would've changed nothing, either.

Normally thinking, you can do nothing with Endurance 0.

For a Mage going solo, the way I spent my Attribute points isn't

wrong.

Endurance 2, Protection 5, Mind 3 is an option, too, but decreasing its greatest charm, the firepower, goes against my thoughts a little.

A Mage equipping a shield and standing on the frontline.

Well, there are probably a few of those in this world.

(Thunder, activate)

Let's try shooting it at a nearby wall for a test.

Actually, I've already tried it before. I don't particularly need to target a monster to use magic.

I can probably use it against humans, too, of course.

During the 10s cast time, I can actually feel my body generate the mana required to shoot the magic.

It doesn't mean that I actually need to say a 10 second long chant.

"Thunder!"

Lightning raced towards the wall.

"I see."

And apparently I don't have to say the chant at the end, either.

However, the lightning feels darker than when I did say it.

I need to test it in practice later, but I can probably think of it having less power, too.

And then there is the cooldown.

Maybe my body is lacking the mana after using the magic, but at least I feel languid.

The cooldown time feels like the time it takes for my body to restore the mana inside it from the air surrounding me.

Why? Because even now lightly glowing particles gather around my body and I start slowly feeling better.

The time that takes? Ten seconds.

———so, can I cast another spell before that time is up?

I once more willed the magic to activate.

The light particles that had still been gathering around my body stopped that and switched to magic activation.

The cooldown was stopped and my sensation changed to that of mana being generated from within my body.

"Thunder!"

I dropped against the wall again.

———the moment the spell activated, a dizzying feeling of exhaustion assaulted me.

This seems like the side effect from not accommodating the cooldown, in other words the time it takes for my body to naturally recover its mana.

Let me focus on recovering for a while and steady my breath.

So this is how it feels to run out of gas.



But if this is it, I can ignore the cooldown when push comes to shove.

There's no need to push myself too much, but knowing it never hurts.

Most importantly, if I'm solo I can only use this as a finisher.

If I can't win with it yet make myself stagger this much, it's over.

Applying it to this place I'm in right now, it's effective against the bears if I can't defeat them with one hit.

I'll still have to work a means to overcome the 10s casting time no matter what though.

"Hmm..."

Then there is the amount of mana I can store in my body, doesn't it change a lot with level and Attributes?

Apprentice Mage Level 5

I leveled up earlier, so I'm level 5 now.

Some time I'll need to try out how much I can ignore the cooldown without running out of gas.

And then——

Magic: Thunder (Proficiency 1)

This Proficiency entry is fairly intriguing.

Shooting the wall like I've been doing is not counted.

It likely increases by defeating enemies and the like.

(Proficiency, huh)

I have various ideas on it, but only time will tell what it exactly does.

And with that, I've finished the verifications I can do myself, I guess?

What's going to happen once I learn Double Cast and Cast Time Reduction?

There are so many things I still don't understand.

"... a mentor would be nice..."

I really want one.

I really want many things.

But, well, now's not the time for that.

How am I going to get back?

That's the question.

I can fight against bear-class enemies while buying time for ten seconds.

"Hmmm... it seems really short, yet long..."

Ten seconds.

That's around the time a world athlete takes to run 100m.

Thinking about it like that, it seems like the blink of an eye.

Now, what should I do...

——and while I was thinking that, the entrance magic circle started shining.

Eh, someone's coming?

In the middle of the night?

Wait, so did I.

Just sitting around and blanking out felt dangerous, so I moved into the corner of the room and readied the Lightning Rod.

From the light appeared——

"O-Oneechan...?"

How did you know I'm here?

That's what I was mainly confused about.

Hearing my voice, Shion-san turned around.

"——oh Lord."

Shion-san murmured something.

Then she came towards me with long steps.

BAM!

That was quite a magnificent sound.

I've been slapped.

"Ah——"

Rather than hurt, everything went pure white.

And while I was dumbfounded, Shion-san checked my body here and there.

"Arms, legs, all there..."

She finished her check and grabbed me by the collar.

My legs lifted off the ground.

Can't, breathe...!

"——Does it hurt? Good. That's nothing to the pain you caused Pops and Mom."

"..."

——I couldn't say anything.

"Just how selfishly have you lived so far!? Were you some caged bird? Or some Miss Happy-go-lucky? Hm!?"

Shion-san's words, hurt.

She choked me to the limit, and when I thought I'd suffocate, she shoved me against the wall.

My legs couldn't muster any strength and I sank to the floor right there.

"——\*cough\*! Hah, ha"

I lowered my eyes as I got my breathing under control.

Scared, I couldn't look up at Shion-san.

My body was trembling.

This is scarier than facing the bear.

Now, I should rather say the kind of fear is different.

Fighting with monsters feels like a game.

——Confronting people, that's real.

"I... I..."

Shion-san grabbed my trembling shoulders once more.

"—— but you know... the fact that you idiot are safe... I'm really so glad. Stupid Alice."

And just like that, she pulled me in and closed me into her arms.

Shion-san was...

"So glad... I'm really..."

She was crying.

Ahh... I see.

This, this is no game, and I'm not alone either.

"I'm sorry..."

I've done something stupid.

"I'm really... sorry..."

"Really now, stupid!"

Voom, she hit her forehead against mine.

Ouch.

Shion-san was a crying mess.

"... can I... still... call you Onee-chan?"

That earned me another headbutt.

Ouch.

"Stupid... no matter how stupid you are, you cannot cut family ties that easily, you stupid Alice!"

"Haha... you're calling me stupid too much."

"I'm not doing it enough, stupid."

Shion-san hugged me once more with all her strength.

The sensation was so incredibly warm. I hugged her back.

Ah. Interacting with people, facing people...

It's so scary...

...and it makes you so happy.

I really was an idiot, I get that now.

And from the bottom of my heart, I'm grateful.

"... thank you, Onee-chan."

I wanted to convey the words from noon once more, coming from the heart this time.

# Chapter 9

## A Day of Punishment

You could very well call it inevitable.

After our reunion, Shion-san led us through the ruins straight to the exit.

Finding out what else the ruins held would wait for another time.

The exit wasn't that far away.

On the way, we encountered bears twice, but with Shion-san, they posed no problem whatsoever.

...really none whatsoever.

I'm not going to be surprised anymore.

But this time, it was Shion-san's turn to be surprised.

"Eh!? One hit!?"

Her eyes widened at the power of the Thunder I had let loose from behind her.

Apparently my Thunder does have the power to fell bears in one hit.

Well, that still doesn't give any new, weird ideas.

And then we returned to Rinnal.

To my home (temporary).

"And this person, he was so worried about you, Alice-chan, he went



round and round and round in circles, you know? He just should've kept you here in the first place, right?"

Right?

Aunty was talking to me with a smile on her face, but I just couldn't get myself to say "yes".

I only apologized.

I profoundly apologized to Uncle, too.

There was this weird feeling of guilt pushing me.

By the way, Shion-san had found uncle acting suspiciously, cornered him with questions and found out about my outing that way.

She'd managed to find me because apparently I'd still been partied with her and through looking at the Status, it seems you can roughly locate your party members.

No, really, I'm sorry.

I clenched my fists, resolved myself and presented Uncle my head.

It's still scary though.

I mean, I don't think (leveled up to) level 6 me's armor stand up to an attack from level 38 Uncle.

However, Uncle...

"Some recklessness suits you young'uns just fine."

And then he made a sombre face and went into the house.

Behind us, Aunty and Shion-san were whispering.

"Oh? He clearly loves Alice."

"Come on, that man. That's so wrong for his age."

Uuuncle?

I'm not into men...

The next day, I was prohibited from adventuring.

As punishment, I was to help all around the house, run errands and the like.

It's a punishment in name, but since I'm a freeloader I think helping out is natural. They're really a nice family.

"For the floor, it's okay if I sweep it with the broom and clean it with a cloth afterwards, right?"

Since it's early in the morning, I'm to start with the cleaning.

Unsurprisingly my long hair would get in the way, so I got it tied into a ponytail with a ribbon from Aunty.

No, I never said I want a ribbon!?

Aunty did it for me, okay!

"Oh my, you're so cute, Alice-chan!"

"Eh, really? Really..."

It's fine that she's happy over it, but I can't honestly share that feeling. Is that due to my male heart?

I don't want to lose it, that feeling.

My eyes met Uncle's, who had taken position on the sofa in the living room.

With his dandy face he gave me an approving nod.

... it's not like I care, but doesn't this guy have a job to do?

What day is it again today?

For now, let's ignore the sloth and start working.

The house is built with wood, so the cleaning is basically the same as it was in school.

By the way, we get water from the well.

It seems there's abundant underground water that's easily tapped with a hand pump.

The pump is right in the garden, so the labor is not that heavy.

...if you have normal Endurance and Strength.

"Fuhhh, fuhhh!"

Filling the bucket and carrying it back inside is quite exhausting.

There may be more than plenty of water underground, but I should still treasure the water I fetch.

Water, precious.

Alright, everything's prepared, let's start cleaning from the high

places.

Cleaning 101.

I began wiping the tops of the shelves and the window frames with a cloth.

"Windows, huh... I wonder how they make the glass."

"Well, with alchemy of course."

Of course, huh, is that so.

Shion-san had come out of her room, replied to my murmur and gone back into her room.

When I turned around, Auntie was sewing at the living room table.

Her hands were glowing.

She was changing the Petite Panther's Furs I had provided into a Leather Robe.

There's no denying it's handmade, yet different from being sewn stitch by stitch.

Fantasy, is amazing.

And Uncle, still sitting on the sofa, gave me a thumbs up.

Whatever, just get to work.

After cleaning the bath, I cleaned the kitchen and then the rest of the house, apart from everyone's rooms.

Because I got up so early, the sun hasn't completely risen yet.

This world isn't yet enslaved to time through clocks.

When the sun may or may not have completely gone up, the church bell rings, and when it may or may not have gone down, it rings once more.

So in the morning, the bell rings with sunrise.

Well, I like it better when the time flows leisurely like this.

The Japanese are too hectic.

For lunch, I ate a bit of the bread Aunty had prepared.

I again confirmed once more that the food isn't that different.

The bread was just like baguette, with some sort of meat and something like lettuce sandwiched in it.

I really want mustard.

As far as appetite goes, I really can't eat anymore since my body shrunk.

One slice of bread, cut so that it fits on the palm of my hand, is the limit.

Uncle and Shion-san are total gluttons though, they eat uncut breads whole.

They must have a high Engel's coefficient<sup>[1]</sup>.

From noon, I was to run errands.

With that, I should learn a bit about the price level, too.

Aunty gave me 100 Rook and sent me on my first errand.

1 Rook = 1 copper coin.

100 Rook = 1 silver coin.

10.000 Rook = 1 gold coin.

That's how the money in this world works.

I received one silver coin and put it into the small pouch hanging from my belt.

All things considered, this is a tranquil town.

Well, my family home was in the boonies, so it's no big difference to there.

"Ahhh, there's a weird Silver Hair! Silver Hair, Silver Hair!"

On the way, some weird stupid brat picked a fight with me.

It's annoying, but I don't want to cause Shion-san trouble, so let's not be rash.

"Ahh, you."

"I'm Kal!"

...so?

So what?

Why did you just introduce yourself so triumphantly?

You're just Stupid Brat with somewhat reddish, frizzy hair.

"... eh-hm, Kal-kun?"

"You, what grade are you in?"

Maybe I should tear him a new one after all?

I wonder, do I gain proficiency from releasing magic against humans?

I'm suddenly in the mood for some inhuman experiments.

"I'm... Alice..."

However!

I'm also reflecting at the moment!

I'm not going to cause problems!

"Alice~? Silver-Haired Alice~! So weird!"

He ran circles around me as if he'd found something funny.

Just when I had started to rather seriously think about bringing hell on earth upon this brat, someone hit him over the head with their fist.

"Agh, OWWW!"

"You're an embarrassment, so stop! I'm really sorry!"

A girl with the same somewhat reddish, frizzy hair as the stupid brat.

Her skin is a healthy light brown and the freckles suit her superbly.

His sister, probably, earnestly apologized for the stupid brat and dragged him away.

"Haa..."

That's one of the things that happened.

And like that, I went along the main road and toured the shops. Although it was noon, there weren't many people around.

A fruit store, a vegetable store, a butcher, there was even a fish dealer.

Since they have fish, does that mean there's a sea nearby?

I can't think they'd refrigerate the fish and carry it from afar.

For the time being, I went around the shops without buying anything.

One rinnal costs 3 Rook.

A vegetable that looks like nothing but a large radish costs 1 Rook.

A fillet of unidentifiable meat, 5 Rook.

4 Rook for a mackerel-looking fish.

Well, even if I buy foodstuff for the whole family and go back, there'll be change left.

They left what I buy to me, too, since I'm in charge of dinner for the day, so I guess I'll make curry. I can make it after all.

"Hm?"

Just when I was about to start buying, a large carriage came onto the main road.

It seemed unusual for the residents as well, as it gathered a lot of stares.

Of course, I'm part of that crowd, too.

The carriage has a splendid design and is a pleasure to behold for a newbie at other worlds like me.



... is what I thought at first, but there's something slightly ominous about it.

Taking a closer look at it as it comes closer, the load area is built like a cage.

It remains a fact though that it's extremely impressive.

A cage blending into that design.

That's my impression.

And the coachman handling the horse as well the man sitting beside him are considerably suspicious, too.

The coachman wears a quite unsociable, cold expressionlessness, but with his black hair and black eyes, well, he's handsome.

He still has a mean look in the eyes.

Age-wise... maybe around Uncle's age?

He still has a mean look in the eyes.

"..."

I stared at him too intensely, so our eyes met.

Well, I don't care.

The man in the prime of his life next to him brought about the intensity of a mafioso, so to speak.

He had his hair all swept back and covered one eye with an eye-patch like Captain Hook.

His appearance implied there was no way he could be anything respectable.

Ahh, I mustn't get involved here.

If I do, Shion-san will be mad at me again.

I'm not interested! To get back to my shopping I... was on the verge of turning around.

I was on the verge, but.

As the carriage went past me, I could finally see what was on the loading area and turned back.

As I was the only person moving weirdly amidst the staring crowd, the person on the loading area shifted her attention to me, too.

She is around my age now?

Shoulder-length blond hair.

Tired green eyes, despaired of the world.

Her breasts don't have the volume of Shion-san's, but her body is round where it counts and tight where it's right; a model figure different from mine.

Like an exhibition piece, she was carried in the cage.

No, she was put on exhibition.

"A slave?"

Maybe she picked up my murmured words, or maybe she guessed them, but she sorrowfully cast down her eyes.

The carriage just continued down the street.

Finally the people turned audience noisily returned to their daily work.

Among them, I continued to look after the carriage until the end.

Before it disappeared, I think "She" turned around and met my eyes once more.

1. <sup>↑</sup> Engel's coefficient: Engel's law is an observation in economics stating that as income rises, the proportion of income spent on food falls, even if actual expenditure on food rises. (quoted from Wikipedia) In other words, Uncle and Shion-san spend more than average on food.

# Chapter 10

## About money

I made stew for dinner.

I couldn't find roux, so a stew without roux it is.

Melt some butter and stir-fry the ingredients.

For seasonings, salt and pepper.

Once it's heated properly, add wheat flour to bring out the thickness of the consomme soup.

Finally add milk and cook it well.

Ahh, just like with rinnals, their names might not be the same, but as long as the taste is the same, there's no problem.

No problem at all.

I basically make no mistakes when it comes to housework.

I don't think it's annoying, and if I do well, I can live every day in a nice atmosphere.

"So good! What is this? I've never seen anything like it, but it's great! Alice, you were good at cooking?"

"Well, I'm not bad."

Shion-san had high praise for me.

"Really, Alice-chan, you're so girlish."

"I-is that so? I think there are cooking men, too, though?"

There's one right in front of you, you know?

"You can become a bride any time!"

Aunty got that distant look in her eyes.

Nono, don't try to throw me out, okay?

Don't sell me!

"... a... wife?"

Ossan is trembling like a leaf, but let's ignore him.

I'm not the only one, you know?

Everyone does.

"By the way, Onee-chan, there's something I wanted to ask you..."

"Hmm, what's up?"

She held her plate out to me for seconds, so I filled it up and gave it back to her.

I wonder if she can eat all that?

"Can I buy a slave?"

"Ahh, from noon, right? They did cause some rumors... you saw them, Alice?"

"I was on the main street just then."

And I can't think of it as someone else's business, either.

In the very beginning, if Uncle had hypothetically been a bad guy, wouldn't I have been sold as a slave or something?

I might have been put onto such a carriage, too, like cattle.

And what would be the fate of a slave like me?

Ahh~

That goes without saying.

"Hmm? Well, you can. Anyone can, if they have the money."

Money, huh.

I got the change from my errands at noon as pocked money, but with that...

"Hmm... and about how much do they cost?"

"Well, that depends on the slave, but... let's see."

Shion gave me a dirty look and made a wicked face.

"For example, a girl like you... 50 gold coins. Around 500.000 Rook, I guess?"

"...Your face is wicked, Onee-chan."

But wait a second.

How much money is that actually?

For today's dinner, I've used 20 Rook.

Ahh, if I think about it like that, I received a considerable amount of spending money. Thank you, Aunty.

So, lunch also costs around 20 Rook; breakfast... well, for simplicity's sake, let's also make it 20 Rook.

Together, that means it takes 60 Rook for a family of four to live one day.

Water is free from the well.

Magic crystals are used for light. They're consumable goods like light bulbs, but they shine by their own power so there's nothing like electric utility fees.

Fire comes from firewood, and fire crystals.

Fire crystals are like magic crystals, but they give off flames and are used in the kitchen.

For heating up the bath and the like, it's firewood.

Uncle chops it.

"Ehhhm?"

Seeing me in deep thought, Shion-san smiled gently.

That smile suits you, Onee-chan.

You don't buy consumable goods every day, so there aren't many

daily expenses other than food, huh?

Of course, there's probably taxes or something, but let's ignore those for the moment.

So, if I calculate with a rough estimate of 80 Rook a day, I can include average expenses for consumables?

"How many days does a year have again?"

"365 of course."

"And the world is round?"

What the heck is this girl talking about? Is that what your eyes are saying? I see.

Please don't burn me at the stake.

"Which means..."

80 Rook times 365 days means with 29.220 Rook we can live for a year.

Roughly 3 gold coins.

"..."

With 3 gold coins, a family of four can live for a year.

So?



"How much... would I cost again?"

"500.000 Rook."

You look like you're enjoying yourself, Onee-chan.

"... around 17 years for a family of four?"

Eh, what's with that scary amount of money?

No no, this is only living expenses. Equipment for adventuring costs money, too, and there are other necessary expenses as well.

Humans need a certain amount of luxury, to reward themselves.

Not everybody's some enlightened Buddha after all...

"... you're not going to sell me, are you?"

"Hmm.... I wonder? If you're too stupid... I don't know..."

Crap, Onee-chan's sadistic side has come forth.

Then, Aunty!

All smiles.

I can't read her.

Is this the skill of adults?

Okay, as a last resort, Uncle!

"...!"

Why did you twitch!?

Why are your eyes wet!?

Adults play dirty...

"Money is scary..."

I want to protect my innocent heart.

But I see, to buy that girl, I need around 500.000 Rook.

... she was super-pretty and all.

The next day, Shion-san and I went to the ruins.

Looks like Shion-san is going to put her own adventuring aside and accompany me until I clear these ruins.

"Alice, you might be stronger than I thought, you know? Still feeble."

"The last word was unnecessary."

We got in from the entrance, fought off several bears and did not turn towards the exit, but the central part of the ruins.

Thunder: 10s cast time, 10s cooldown (Proficiency 8)

Following behind Shion-san, I checked the magic I have.

It looks like at proficiency 8, there are no changes yet.

Even if the power has changed, since I only need one hit for a bear anyway I frankly have no idea.

"So, what's in these ruins?"

"The central room has the Wellspring of Blessings."

"Wellspring of Blessings?"

"Yeah, if a level 10 apprentice drinks from it and gains its blessing, he or she can class-up. The first step in becoming a true adventurer."

So this is where you class-up.

No, I've wondered myself how long it would take until I could get rid of the apprentice.

"Hee~. And there are springs like this all throughout the world?"

"Well, yeah. It would be a mess if you could only class-up here, right?"

Well, of course.

"Generally towns form near ruins like this. It's a good place for apprentices to train, too, and all."

Although I got into a life-and-death situation here.

"Only for the sake of adventurers?"

"Nah, that would be too much after all. Around ruins with Wellsprings of Blessings, there's a lot of underground water, you see. That makes it easy for people to live there."

I see, so that's why.

"But doesn't that mean the water from the well in the garden comes from the Wellspring of Blessings, too?"

Can't I just drink there?

"Haha, that's true. The central room of the ruins, it's really lit up by magic crystals. You have to drink the water there to get the blessing."

"So I can't cheat."

"Exactly."

Level 11 Maneater

While we were chatting, we encountered a new enemy.

It has a dreadful name, but it's just a green blob.

Or rather, it's a slime.

I finally met a slime!

"Physical attacks don't work well against these, so Alice, if you please."

Shion drew her sword and went ahead to buy me time.

The slime attacked by whipping with tentacles formed from its own body.

So it doesn't simply tackle you?

Scary!

As always, Shion-san dodged those with light movements.

What's with this sense of security.

However, isn't she done for once one attack hits?

She's fine for now.

But won't she encounter an enemy whose attacks she can't dodge one day?

What's Shion-san going to do with her Endurance 1, Protection 1 then?

(I'll defeat them before they can eat her!)

That's my resolve.

This is the first time I've encountered the slime, so I give it my full power, with the chant.

“Split the heavens and become a ray of light, to strike my enemies  
—— Thunder!”

The lightning directly hit the slime.

By the way, my attack magic doesn't affect party members, is what

Shion-san taught me, so I don't have to particularly mind my allies' movements.

That makes things a lot easier.

"Woah..."

The slime just popped from my one attack.

And splattered all over the place.

Gross...

No drop item.

"Fuhh, so, the room with the ruins' guardian is right ahead. What's your level at the moment?"

Guardian? Does that clearly mean this place's boss fight is waiting?

Well, with Shion-san there, I'll be fine, probably.

"Ah? Level 9."

"Excellent. You'll probably level up to 10 from the guardian. Let's go, Alice."

"Onee-chan, you look like you're enjoying yourself..."

In the end, adventurers really do like adventure, don't they...

No no, me too, of course.

I hurried after Shion-san into the central room.

# Chapter 11

## Adventurer

Under Shion-san's guidance, we arrived at the boss room, so to speak.

In front of the massive door, anxiety made my heart beat harder.

"As expected, this makes my heart race."

"You're flat, so I bet one can hear your heartbeat really well."

Eh?

Does having large breasts make it difficult to hear the heartbeat?

"... hm? You're not getting angry?"

"Eh? A-ahh! No, no, my breasts are still going to grow from now on!"

So this was a point to get angry, I see.

For me, large or small doesn't matter at all though.

And actually, my breasts won't grow anymore.

Because god decided so.

"... hey, why did you suddenly bring that up anyway?"

"Well, I thought you were nervous and wanted to calm you down."

"Please stop. That's old man humor, Onee-chan."

That must've hit her hard because Shion-san let her head hang.

E-eh?

Did I just discourage the frontliner before the boss fight?

"Old man..."

"Wai, you're too hung up over that, I'm sorry! I should've said it differently!"

"It's fine, I don't mind it..."

Then look at me!?

"Now now, let's go, Onee-chan! Let's kick some monster ass to feel better!"

I grabbed Shion-san's arm and pushed the door open.

"Old man..."

I'm begging you here!?

Shion-san!

The room's illumination from magic crystals was particularly strong



for the ruin, like we had come out into daylight.

Inside the light room, I could see no enemy that might suddenly attack us.

I pulled Shion-san by the arm and completely entered the room for the moment.

Surveying the room, the roots spread all around caught my eyes.

And in the center of the room grew a splendid tree that almost reached the ceiling.

Did the roots grow from that tree?

While I was observing the tree, the door behind us suddenly slammed shut.

By itself.

"That surprised me..."

I thought someone was attacking us from behind.

I'd even turned around and taken a long, long look.

"It's coming."

Ah, she's back.

Shion-san got away from my hand and stepped forward, drew her sword and brandished it.

Eh, is something there?

"..... Hii!"

As I was looking at the room, suddenly an eye opened in the tree's trunk.

...now that was a surprise.

Level 14 Elder Tree

I've identified it!

"Don't get close! Alice!"

"Yes! Good luck!"

Shion-san ran towards the big tree.

As expected, it attacked with several of its roots acting like whips.

There are so many of them!

The slime's whips don't even compare!

Making the charging Shion-san its target, the big tree threw attacks at her from all directions.

Hey, isn't this bad after all!?

I was a bit worried, but then she dodged the tree's whips with dancing steps.

After gradually getting closer like that, once she was in range she attacked the tree with rapid strikes.

She chopped the wood, with her sword.

From the looks of it it's bone-hard labor.

Apparently Uncle came here with her when Shion-san was an Apprentice Swordsman.

Then, the two could switch up the frontline work, but now Shion-san

is alone.

If she gets tired before this is over...

And Shion-san's Endurance is the same as mine!

Well, her level's different though.

But... Uncle's been dispatching monsters on request of the guild.

So he wasn't just a sloth.

I'm glad, he actually has a job.

(Isn't it about time now?)

Just when I thought that, my eyes met Shion-san's.

She nodded.

I finally activated my magic.

No, there's a reason why I didn't attack straight away.

In short, if Shion-san doesn't attack for a bit and build up aggro beforehand, the aggro will switch from her to me.

My magic is just that strong.

And once I have aggro, I can't deal with it.

Uhm, wasn't there a good term in relation to this?

——Leroy Jenkins!<sup>[1]</sup>

I don't want people to call me that!

Oops, play time over.

“Split the heavens and become a ray of light, to strike my enemies  
——— Thunder!”

The target's so big there's no way for me to miss.

Direct hit!

The tree's movements stopped for a moment.

But that's not enough to defeat it.

I noticed the tree begin to move once more.

All within predictions.

I steadied my breath.

10s cooldown.

With Shion-san here, there's no———

"ALICE! It's coming for you!"

"EHH!?"

I got aggro with just one attack!?

Like tentacles, the tree's whips closed in on me.

Some of them were still attacking Shion-san so it's not like I can't  
dodge them at all though.

"CRAAAP!"

I desperately dodged.

I looked well and hit the ones I couldn't dodge with the Lightning Rod.

I can shoot the next one soon—— I thought and got negligent.

"Wai! HYAAAA!!"

At some point, a tentacle had grabbed my ankle and suspended me midair.

Wait, wait!

From the belt down, my Leather Robe is like a skirt, so this posture is bad!

I reflexively pinned down my skirt.

"Is this the time to be embarrassed!? You're such a sheltered girl!"

Shion-san was shouting to me while showing off the divine display of both dodging the attacks against her and warding off the whips that came to finish me off.

Nono, if anything I'm a man, you know!?

But what's with this embarrassment!?

All the while, the tentacle grabbing my leg crept closer towards my body.

"Heyheyhey! Are you after me!? Are you after me!? You perverted tree!!"

I trash talked the monster.

Maybe it was my imagination, but I think I saw the tree's eye smile.

No... that was my imagination, right?

"Wa, really, give... ugh"

From my leg, the tentacle coiled its way to my belly and breasts.

Its only compassion was that it did it from above my clothes. But why does this peculiar pressure make me moan!?

"... ah, u"

"Woah.... that's so hot, Alice...."

Don't be impressed!

Ey, I'm not someone a monster like you can do with as you please!!

"Split the heavens and become a ray of light, to strike, AHH... my enemies! Thunder!!!"

I properly activated the magic and once more, it scored a direct hit on the perverted tree.

This time it seems the big tree couldn't bear it and withered, dissolved and disappeared.

"Wahhh!"

I fell from where it had held me midair...

"Oops."

... but Shion-san caught me in a princess carry.

...

Ahhh, I'm getting princess-carried~~.

"You're crying!?"

Shion-san looked a bit troubled.

"It's still pure..."

"No, no, I know that."

"My heart isn't tainted yet..."

"What!?"

Shion-san could only tilt her head in confusion at the mixed feelings assaulting my male heart.

I sulked for a while, but then we finally opened the door in the middle of the room and arrived at the Wellspring of Blessings.

"Woah, is this the place?"

"Yeah. Pretty, right?"

Like Shion-san had said, the water seemingly welling up from below shone deep blue, maybe due to the magic crystals around it, maybe by itself.

Does it taste like a Blue Hawaiian<sup>[2]</sup>, too?

"Can I just drink it?"

"Of course."

I got Shion-san's okay, crouched down right there, scooped up water with both hands and drank it.

Okay, it's water.

But drinking it gave me this nice and warm feeling throughout.

Also, my body faintly glowed like when I'm activating magic.

Impressed, I watched it all, but before long the light disappeared.

"Have a look at your Status?"

Prompted by Shion-san, I checked my Status.

Name: Alice

Race: Halfelf

Gender: Female

Age: 15



Class: Mage  
Level: 1

"Oh? ...o-oh?"

Mage... level 1!?

My level was reset?

"Well, I guess this is the starting line."

I see, putting it like this, I have thought I was catching up to Shion-san awfully quickly, considering I had only started adventuring the day before yesterday.

"But with this, you can also register at the guild."

"Right, the guild!"

Which reminds me, Aunty said I need to pay 1000 Rook, but not having an Apprentice Class was the other condition.

"If you register at the guild, you can take all kinds of requests, sell drop items and so on. It's the foundation of working as an adventurer."

"Adventurer, huh..."

"Although in all honesty, I don't want you to force yourself too much, it is dangerous after all."

Shion-san embarrassedly scratched her cheek.

"But for the moment..."

As always, Shion-san's friendly smile felt good.

She smiled at me with it and...

"Congratulations on becoming an adventurer, Alice!"

"... thanks!"

I strongly grasped the hand Shion-san held out to me.

1. [↑](#) Leroy Jenkins: Famous World of Warcraft player pulling all the monsters in a room and wiping out his group, on video. Youtube it or so.
2. [↑](#) Blue Hawaiian: A cocktail. Very blue. Duhhh.

# Chapter 12

## Ilya

After returning to the town after noon, Shion-san and I split up.

Shion-san's adventurer comrades dragged her off saying they needed her on the frontline no matter what.

Shion-san seemed really reluctant to let me go, but after finally giving me the 1000 Rook to register at the guild, she was dragged to work.

"Right, Onee-chan doesn't belong to me. That's the problem..."

One day I'm going to leave this town and travel the world.

However, Shion-san has family here as well as her adventurer comrades.

Not to be conceited, but if I asked her, I think she would come with me.

But I only want to do that if there's no other way.

"Uhm, guess for now I'll start by registering at the guild and saving up money."

At present, I'm receiving too much support.

I have to pay back all the favors I have received.

I'd asked about the general location before, so I made my way to

this town's guild.

The town wasn't that big so I found it right away.

They had put a sign outside saying 'Guild, Rinnal Branch.'

As always, I can read and I can converse.

This conversion into Japanese is too useful.

Mulling over those thoughts, I crashed into someone.

Someone about to leave the guild.

"Ah! I'm sorry——ah."

I looked at the person I'd run into and was in for a surprise.

Mean-Look-In-The-Eyes!

"...it's alright."

I'm not going to get involved with this person.

That's what I thought, bowed my head once more and tried to go past him.

"Hey."

Don't talk to me!

I reluctantly stopped and turned around.

"... what is it?"

"Are you an elf?"

"I'm not."

"... I see."

Not because I'm a halfelf, but because my family told me not to reveal my race.

You should listen to people's warnings.

Only fools don't learn from failure.

The man said nothing else and tried to leave, but this time I remembered something.

"Ah, wait a moment!"

"What?"

The man turned around, annoyed.

Hey, why don't you show some more sociability?

"You, you're from the carriage yesterday, right?"

"Right."

Well, I wouldn't easily mistake a person that unsociable and dressed all in black anyway.

"The person on that carriage, uhm.... that is..."

"The slave."

While I was hesitating to say it, he easily did.

I see. So she really is a slave.

"Are you going to stay in town for a while?"

"For a week, I've heard. What about it?"

One week.

One week, to earn a fortune of 500.000 Rook.

Talk about unrealistic.

"That girl... was she bought by someone already?"

"No, not yet. We need to go to the capital to find a buyer. She's a prize."

Prize?

What's that about? Does he mean out here in the boonies nobody can pay the 500.000 Rook for her?

"What, do you want that?"

A slave.

A being that prioritizes their master over anything else.

I don't plan to be unreasonable in my demands, but they would always follow me, no matter where I go and what I do.

To be honest? That would be a great help.

"... I'm thinking about it a little."

"Do you have money?"

"Not enough to buy her."

There's no need to tell him I almost have nothing with foolish honesty.

The unsociable man went pensive for a while and kept his mouth shut.

"Oh, well. Just meet the real thing once then, to get into the mood to buy it."

"Eh!?"

"We're renting a room for it at the slavery firm down the street. If you're interested in buying after all, you can also have a look at other slaves."

The word slavery firm alone is suspicious already.

Will I really be alright if I go alone?

I'm not going to end up on the wrong side of the cage bars myself, am I?

"... I don't look it, but I'm a mage. You'd better be prepared for the consequences if you make a weird move."

"We're not that impolite to customers. Trust is important in business. Make light of it and the firm crumbles."

What he says makes sense, but what he does is still suspicious.

"Can I go home once and inform them where I'm going first?"

"Of course, I don't mind. I'm going to kill time in the guild for a while. Just come back when you're interested."

According to Shion-san, I'm worth 500.000 Rook.

Actually, I don't agree with slavery, but... I'm interested, in that girl.

Thus I went home once and informed Aunty.

It goes without saying that she was worried about me, but it seems the slavery firm, contrary to my thoughts, is doing an upright business.

That's what Aunty said.

They also shouldn't do something weird all of a sudden.

Just in case, I checked my own Status.

I got rid of the apprentice.

I need to know what changed.

I immediately noticed the Magic entry and the Skill entry.

Skill: selectable.

Attack Magic: Thunder (Proficiency 10)

Support Magic: Heal



It really has increased.

Because Support Magic has shown up among the entries, the entry that has been simply Magic so far was differentiated into Attack Magic.

Okay, let's first have a look at the Skill entry then.

Latent Potential, Double Cast, Cast Time Reduction

I see, so here is where I can finally use the special abilities I had set in the very beginning.

I can select one among them.

In that case, there's not even room for thought what to pick.

Cast Time Reduction

That's the only option.

Latent has an impressive name, but I don't have the slightest idea what it does.

I can pick that later.

I have an idea for Double Cast, but I feel it would be difficult for the current me to utilize.

I think I'll be able to use it better once I've grown a bit.

I selected the skill Cast Time Reduction.

Skill: Cast Time Reduction (special)

What's this special?

What makes it's so special from a regular Cast Time Reduction?

Time to verify that!

To begin with, let's check the Magic entry.

Thunder: no cast time, 10s cooldown (proficiency 10)

T-this is...

Cast time.... none!?

It was this strong!?

Even the 10s cast time so far haven't been that inconvenient?

At least while in a party.

Somehow, I get the feeling the road to being the strongest opening all of a sudden...

Support Magic: Heal: no cast time, 20s cooldown

I can't choose a support magic.

With a healing class, I probably would've had a selection.

But Heal, huh.

Isn't it wonderful to be able to heal myself now?

There's no cast time, either.

Well, the 20s cooldown looks like a heavy restriction.

If I use it along with attack magic, I'd probably collapse before the battle's even begun.

But that's it for the moment, I guess?

"But with this, I can resist enough if something does happen."

If I activate magic, there's no way to hide the light radiating from my body during the casting.

But they shouldn't expect eating a magic attack instantly.

They don't, right?

I'm not normal, right?

Completely prepared now, I met up with the man and went to the slavery firm.

The building is huge, it feels even more imposing than the guild.

They might be hauling in the money.

"By the way, what's your name?"

"... Solt."

I'm sorry, I can't bear the silence, so I talked to you.

But that's the only question that came to mind.

"..."

"..."

Maybe I should introduce myself in return?

Now, that's good manners, right?

Manners, precious.

"Uhm, I'm Alice."

"I see."

"..."

"..."

The conversaaatiooon!!!

Let's try to have a conversation here!!

You're trying to do business here, aren't you!?

If you can sell anything with that arrogant attitude of yours, the uncles and aunties from the shopping street are going to revolt!

"... Solt-san, you're pitch black, aren't you. The clothes, even."

"It is so that I can blend into the darkness, for work."

"... I, see."

What's with that answer? I'm scared to ask more.

What are you actually working as in the first place!?

"..."

"... isn't it dangerous to travel while showing off slaves, like yesterday?"

But I don't lose heart!

"Well, we get attacked by bandits a lot?"

So what?

That's hidden in his reply.

This blackie... just how strong is he?

"... right..."

When the awkwardness had reached its peak, I was led into a reception room and offered a seat on the sofa.

I quietly accepted.

Blackie did not sit down but withdrew into a backroom.

I was bored so I looked around the room.

There were paintings and vases, carpets were laid out; an awing room.

It really showed off that deals with a lot of money were made here.

"I'm sorry for the wait. Oh, what a lovely lady we have here."

The eye-patched man came from the backroom.

The atmosphere around him was somewhat different.

As indifferent as possible, I returned his greetings.

The eye-patched man sat down on the sofa facing mine.

"Let us prepare you a drink. Would black tea be alright?"

Crap, I haven't learned Squelch<sup>[1]</sup>.

"No thank you. Let's get to the point."

"Very well. Solt told me you are looking for a slave?"

"Indeed. I am adventurer, I think a slave to accompany me would help me greatly."

"I see, a combat slave. An adventurer would certainly need one."

Need? Why is that?

It's a bad way to put it, but: Since you can just throw them away, it's good to let them do dangerous things?

"I'm a mage, so I would be grateful for someone I can leave the frontline to."

"Ohh? A mage, at your age?"

The eye-patched man narrowed his eyes, impressed.

Eh?

Shion-san wasn't that surprised, so I thought it was normal...?

"Excuse me, Miss, but... are an elf?"

"I'm not."

How many times does this make now?

What's so special about these elves?

"Hmm..."

The eye-patched man's other eye didn't look convinced, but he calmed his expression right away.

"I'm sorry for derailing the topic. Let me bring some of our firm's slaves that we can recommend to you, Miss."

"About that, today there is only a single slave I would like to see."

"Hoo?"

He was acting surprised, but I'm sure Blackie told him beforehand.

Sheesh, adults are cunning.

Disrupting the flow of the conversation for no clear reason.

Well, maybe I'm trying to speed it up too much.

"The one you brought on the carriage yesterday, show me that one."

"Ahaha, you have a discerning eye. Very well, please wait a

moment."

The eye-patched man rang the little bell on the table and sent someone a signal.

Without a wait deserving that name, the door further in opened.

I'm sure everything's been long prepared.

"...excuse us, please."

Urged by Blackie, She entered the room.

She is about my height?

Seeing her up close, she really is beautiful.

Her face was almost too pretty.

Her shining, shoulder-length blond hair is floating around it.

Her green eyes are deep and clear like emeralds, but regrettably they're not shining.

She is overall lacking liveliness.

From her looks alone, I think she doesn't fall short of myself who borrowed the power of the god called character creation.

Don't tell me, did she get reborn, too, and lose?

Did she make a perfect character, just like me, and I would've shared this fate if I hadn't met Uncle?

"The Miss said she wants to see you. Greet her."

"...!?"



The girl who had not raised her eyes since the moment she entered the room listlessly looked up. The moment she saw me, surprise showed on her face.

"What are you doing."

"M-my apologies! Ilya is my name. Milady."

Her curtsy and greeting have elegance.

It is so natural, they couldn't have taught her in a day or two.

"Are you... going to buy me?"

I can see the hope in her eyes.

I understand the feeling.

I mean, if I were in her place, I'd also prefer this over some greasy old ass. A lot.

"I'm considering it."

Alright, what am I going to do.

1. [↑](#) Squelch: A spell to remove Poisoning in the Dragon Quest game series

# Chapter 13

## Testing waters, waters testing

Alright, to begin with, I'd like to know her price.

Ignoring Her——Ilya's, it seems, imploring gaze, I erased my expressions.

I'm not going to be overcharged here.

Even if I don't have the money in the first place.

Buying everything at the price it's offered at is too Japanese.

This is another world.

Now then...

"I see. She certainly is pretty. But doesn't she seem a bit listless?"

"That's because not even a week has passed since we procured her. It must still be difficult for her to accept the reality of the situation."

That's really recent.

"However, she knows etiquette from before. She's not just some town girl."

Like that he nonchalantly raised her value.

"One week. Which means the people of your firm didn't have time to teach her anything... I understand you had no time to raise her value, correct?"

That I directly went and asked to see her was a mistake, but I'd like to keep the stance that I don't have to buy her no matter what.

At least superficially.

"Hmm, that's what it means."

He didn't even twitch.

Well, of course, no matter what a little girl like me says, he far surpasses me in experience.

"As an adventurer, I think it's better if I'm accompanied by a girl. However, if she can't fight, I'd be troubled, too. Would she have combat experience?"

Well, even if she doesn't, the demand from customers other than me should be high.

From men, you know?

"I see. Why don't you take a look at her Attributes then?"

Oh?

He seems really confident, from his reply.

Very well.

Let's have a look at those Attributes.

"May I?"

"Of course. Convincing the customer and making him happy is this firm's policy, Miss. Fraud is something only third-rates stoop to."

He's sure making a real job of it.

Signaled by the eye-patched man, Blackie guided Her to my side.

There, she showed her Status with Attributes only.

So they aren't showing me all at once.

Step by step, is it.

Strength 1, Endurance 3, Protection 5, Agility 1, Mind 0

"T-this is..."

This is too different from her appearance and impression!

"How is it? The one-sidedness isn't very praiseworthy, but I believe she completely fulfills your needs, Miss."

Ridiculous.

I unintentionally stared at her.

"It would be my pleasure, Milady."

She bashfully talking to me is actually indomitable, like a raspberry shaken in the wind.

The stalk is full of thorns, but the white petals bloom so very neatly and sweetly.

Other worlds, incredible.

The gap between appearance and ability is too big.

Where in that slender body of hers does she hide that sturdiness?

"... it seems so."

While reacting to Her reverence by lightly raising my hand, I thought.

If I have her, won't she become my shield even if Shion-san is not around?

Rather, speaking of becoming a shield, I can't think of anyone being more suited.

I want her.

No, now I really want her.

Seeing the real thing really does drive up your desire to buy it."But she doesn't have any combat experience, does she?"

I was persistently asking the eye-patched man, not the girl next to me.

I can't have them take me lightly.

"She doesn't."

Meaning she is a level one apprentice, huh.

"Her class?"

"Of course you can change it, but she is currently a Lancer."

Of course I can change it. Is that so?

"Do you want to confirm it?"

"No need. I trust you, Mister."

I composedly smiled.

I've become thick-skinned, too.

I can't manage it in front of Shion-san no matter what, but maybe I'm someone who can really put up a strong front?

(However, so far I haven't found a serious demerit. If anything, she's gathering points?)

...

Then it's time for a leading question, I think.

"I see. I've gotten a good grasp of her value."

She's completely unrefined, but there couldn't be a better raw gem.

That's how it is.

And——

"——This girl's not an elf, is she?"

The eye-patched man's mild smile deepened even further.

As if to say he liked the question.

"As expected, Miss. You are not swayed by outward appearance alone."

"Of course not."

Of course not my ass.

"Elven slaves are scarce. I want to obtain some even if I have to go to some length, but currently I don't have any."

I'm not an elf, okay?

Although I definitely won't show you my Status.

But... what do I do?

Do I push on, even if it's dangerous?

...

Alright.

"... If I said I have some connection to elves—— would that draw your interest?"

Not only Eyepatch, even the black-clothed man's atmosphere changed.

Crap, don't get violent, okay?

I still didn't eradicate my smile.

"I thought you weren't a just a sheltered, young lady, but this is a surprise."

The eye-patched man placed his elbows on the table and intertwined his fingers.

"Is that story true?"

"Let's say I cannot make definite promises."

"Of course not. It's elves we're talking about. Still, very intriguing."

Hmm.

Let's hope this doesn't cause any trouble between humans and elves.

"I thought you'd say so. But, let's keep today's conversation focused on this girl, shall we?"



At any rate, I'm suddenly down to only one card I can play.

Because I only have one trump card, right now.

Right, myself.

The suicidal act of revealing my Status.

"Hehe, you got me there, Miss. I underestimated you just a bit. It's been a while since I've had such an enjoyable negotiation. Including your fairness to the eyes, Miss."

"Why thank you."

I cast down my eyes and calmly smiled.

For some reason, I could hear the girl next to me make a little, admiring sound.

"Then, shall we release her Status? Including her race, that is."

"No, it's fine. Let's confirm that for when we make the final contract."

I softly rejected the eye-patched man's proposal.

Stop cornering me already.

I still have absolutely no concrete idea how to obtain her.

"Is that so. Let's stop beating around the bush then. This firm has set her price to be 500.000 Rook... is what I would like to say, but."

There the eye-patched man cut off his words and smiled at me.

"I'm dealing with you here, Miss. What do you think about specially making it 400.000 Rook?"

"I think that's a fair price."

So much!

"Today, since the beginning I came here only to look at her, but is she always here? Because I also heard she is a prize?"

I glanced at the black-clothed man.

I thought he was expressionless, so why does he stare at me with such a mean look in the eyes!

No, he's had that mean look in the eyes in the first place, so he's normal right now?

"We intended to use her as a prize for the combat tournament in the royal capital's coliseum. But well, we have replacements. If you buy her here, now, there's not much of a problem."

"I see, in the coliseum."

That also gets the adrenaline flowing.

But in that case——

"Then, if I participate and become the champion, I can also obtain her, correct?"

"Hahahahaha!"

The eye-patched man couldn't bear it any more and laughed out loudly while slapping his knees.

"Hah, apologies. You are absolutely right, Miss. Truly interesting, you are."

"Well, I can also see how selling her for more to the coliseum, making her a prize, is more advantageous for you, Mister."

Become a champion at the combat tournament or earn 400.000 Rook, just what is more realistic, huh.

Keeping my composed smile, I stood up.

"Hehe, either way, I won't think of it as a loss. If I can deal with a personage such as you, Miss."

The eye-patched man also stood up and signaled the black-clothed man to escort me out.

Blackie opened the door I'd come in through.

"It is business practice not to exchange names with first-time customers, but I would like to introduce myself regardless." The eye-patched man bowed with the elegance reminiscent of a butler.

"Bertrand is my name. It was a pleasure making your acquaintance, Miss."

"Alice. This was a valuable conversation. Let's talk again, Bertrand-sama."

I concisely answered, calmly bowed and headed towards the door.  
In passing, I met Her eyes just once.  
For some reason, she was blushing.

"... beautiful."

...let's pretend I didn't hear that.

"I'll make you mine. I've decided."

I whispered her just that.  
After passing her, I felt a stare against my back.

"Y-yes! I'm looking forward to it, Lady Alice!"

Ahh.

I got through my grandstand play.  
From here on out, I'm flying blind.  
Probably nobody in this room knew these thoughts going through my head.

# Chapter 14

## Other World Maid Cafe Revolution

"Wait!"

How should I get Ilya?

While mulling that and leaving the firm, I was suddenly called to a stop.

"... yes?"

When I turned around, Blackie was glaring at me with an amazing expression.

Nono, I'm not the killer of your parents, okay?

"Are you an elf?"

"... isn't it against the rules to try getting that information without compensation?"

"Are you going to tell me if I get you that woman?"

... excuse me?

I doubted my ears for a second.

After blinking 2.3 times, I tilted my head in confusion.

"What are elves to you then?"

"... I have a grudge against them."

I about-faced.

"Wait!"

Nono, for that reason alone I mustn't get involved with you.

"Get lost."

"If I don't have enough money, I'll enter than tournament and win her."

"As someone from the firm? Talk about fixed games. Don't tell me, that was the plan since the beginning?"

In that case the firm is shady after all.

"This is unrelated to the firm. Besides, I'm a mercenary. I'm just hired with money."

"I don't think this is a problem that's solved just because you don't belong to the firm, though..."

However, Blackie seems strong.

Maybe he can win and obtain Ilya for me.

... Still. In that case, I would sell myself out.

Uhhhm.

"I'm going to make my own move."

"I don't mind. I'm going to do what I want, too. Depending on the result, I'll get my reward."

Blackie come to an agreement by himself and returned into the firm.

"... Solt, was it?"

Just what in the world did the elves do to him.

Be that as it may.

First comes money.

Without money, I cannot pay back my favors.

Without money, I cannot buy Ilya.

Without money, I cannot get proper equipment.

Without money, I cannot go to the royal capital.

Thus, I wouldn't be able to obtain Ilya, either.

Therefore I finally went to my original target, the guild.

"Money, money, money..."

No matter where I go, the way of the world is tough.

"Ah? Oh, you are..."

When I entered the guild and went to the counter, a receptionist girl called out to me.

Hm?

Red, frizzy hair and freckles?

"Ahh, from that time?"

The face of that cheeky brat immediately came to mind.

"I'm really sorry for what my little brother did!"

No, if you bow with enough vigor to seem like you'll hit your head against the counter to apologize, it's a bit embarrassing for me, too.

Look, the others around us are watching curiously!

"No, no, please raise your hand. It's not like anything happened back then. You're exaggerating."

"Thank you."

Oh?

Somehow her smile is very relaxing.

Like you can be yourself; like you don't have to be on guard...



"So you're working at the guild?"

"Yes. Ah, I'm Eleanor."

"I'm Alice."

"I know. My little brother was so annoying about it, sheesh. You're too beautiful, Alice-san. He wanted you to notice him, you know? He's such a rascal, but still a man, I guess."

To think I'd tempt such a stupid brat even...

Just what sin have I created?

No, that doesn't matter at all.

"By the way——"

"Ah! You have business at the guild, don't you? I'm sorry."

So quick to change gears~.

You can just let me finish talking, you know?

"Ehm, first I'd like to register as an adventurer at the guild."

"Got it! Then please fill out this form with your name, age, gender, class, and level."

"There's no need for the race?"

"If you wrote that, it might lead to discrimination. The guild however opens its gates to everyone."

I see, that helps.

Wait, if there would've been a problem with my race, Shion-san wouldn't have sent me here alone.

I entered the necessary information on me in the blanks.

It's a weird thing.

I think I write in Japanese, but it's being changed into Somethingish.

"Is this alright?"

"Thank you... ehm... a Mage!? Ah, no, I mean yes, it's alright."

She sure is lively...

"For validation, could you please show your Status to me? With the race hidden, of course."

"Suuure."

I operated the Status and showed it to Eleanor.

She sure is diligent, enthusiastically comparing it to the form. It's kinda cute.

"Yes, everything in order. Thank you very much!"

"No, the pleasure is mine."

For some reason I bowed my head.

I'm a Japanese through and through, aren't I.

"Now, since the paperwork is in order, may I please have the registration fee of 1000 Rook?"

"Of course."

I put the ten silver coins I'd received from Shion-san onto the counter.

"I've certainly received the money. With this you're an adventurer and can use all the guilds on the continent, Alice-san."

"Hee, right away?"

"Of course. The information we keep on you is transmitted and exchanged between guilds via magic crystals. When dealing a guild anywhere, you only have to display your Status and you will be recognized."

Heyhey, fantasy, what's this? The internet?

"Also, please take care that there's an update once a year. On that occasion, your registered information will be renewed and a renewal fee of 500 Rook becomes necessary."

"I see."

They're doing a fine business, these guilds.

There should be quite a number of adventurers. Don't they have quite the income with renewal fees alone?

"But Alice, so you are fifteen, huh... You're two years younger than me, yet already an adventurer. You're amazing!"

"Ehmm, well, it's a miracle I'm still alive though..."

"No need to be so humble!"

No, it's a fact.

"Now, it may be a bit sudden, but do you have some work for me?"

I'm fighting a battle against time here, aren't I.

"Hmm, let's see. The good jobs are all being done by other adventurers already, so... Ah!"

Eleanor stared at some documents for a while before she made a smile like she had thought of something good.

How curious.

I have very few memories where the something good that people making that face thought of was also something good for me.

"... is there something?"

"Yes, I've thought of an amazingly good job!"

Saying she thought of a job is weird no matter how you look at it, isn't it?

It is a guild job, right?

With my anxiety skyrocketing, I listened to Eleanor's proposal.

"Welcome back, Master! Mistress!"

On that evening, there was one special-of-the-day eatery where the tired office workers went to on their way home.

It's name was "Milky Way".

No, sorry, I was indulging escapism for a bit.

Putting it coolly doesn't help.

"Welcome back, Master! Mistress!"

I've repeated that mind-twisting standard line innumerable times now.

Every single time, the men entering the store stared at me.

Your stares are hurting me...

What the heck am I doing here?

To put it bluntly, I'm a maid in a maid cafe.

That should say it all.

I've taken other worlds lightly.

If there are slaves, then of course there are also more maids than in the real world——although that way of putting it is strange by now.

In that case, it's not strange for a store to tend to this kind of niche.

No, I've really taken other worlds lightly.

"Alice-san! A mixed juice for table 3!"

From Eleanore in the kitchen came another demonic order.

Right, this place is run by Eleanor's family.

I was employed as a part-time worker.

"... yes!"

With all my strength, I hid my despair under a smile.

... haha.

Stop kidding me!

Even if my heart is male, I'm still acting out a woman.

A maid?

Ahh, a maid, right.

I'll give you maid.

Anyone looking at me right now would think 'maid'.

The frilly, cute headdress decorating my hair.

The frilly, cute dress down to my knees with the apron on top.

My legs clad in knee-high socks, all perfect!

There's no reason I can't do this!

"I'm sorry for the wait, Master! Mistress!" I energetically called out in front of the table of an adventurer-looking group.

I'd carried the shaker with drinks to table 3 and held it up high in front of the customer.

I took a deep breath and made my whole face smile.

"Then, we're going to cast the spell. Do it with me, Mistress!"

I shook the readied shaker in my hands!

"Shakashaka♪"

"... shakashaka."

"Furifuri♪"

"... furifuri."

"Moemoe♪"

"... moe?"

"Kyunkyun♪"

"Kyunkyun."

"Become delicious! Moemoekyuuun♪"

I put in love and courage and hope with all my strength!

And then I put the perfected Mixed Juich! carefully down in front of the mistress.

That's when I first met the customer's eyes.

"H-hey. Good job, Alice."

"O..... nee... chan."

It was Shion.

"..."

"..."

"Nh."

"Nh?"

"NOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!"

"Wai!? Alice!? You're inside the store now!?"

"Tell me earlier! You're horrible, Onee-channn!"

"Don't cry! Hey, you were really professional, Alice!"

That day, the Milky Way was turbulent until late into the night.

And I, I got my first pay in this other world.

500 Rook.

Earning money is really tough.



# Chapter 15

## A girl

"I'll stop being a girl."

"... what?"

The day after the maid incident, I called Shion-san to my room and made that confession with a serious face.

I've had enough.

It's true that I thought it would be fun acting out a girl.

But still!

It doesn't mean I want to embarrass myself in front of people!

It doesn't mean I want to wear those frilly clothes and say master this, mistress that!

If anything, I'm in another world now, I want people to say that to me.

I need Ilya.

To keep my identity intact, I need Ilya.

I'm sure now.

And as expected, my confession made Shion-san look like she didn't know what hit her.

"Are you listening, Onee-chan?"

"Yeah, you regularly say some incomprehensible things..."

Exasperated, Shion-san threw herself onto my bed.

Nono, having a girl throw herself onto my bed, this is quite a situation.

However, since I'm acting a girl right now, it's also completely meaningless!

"Please listen, Onee-chan. Actually... I used to be a man!"

"..... haa. Oh, were you."

That reply leaves something to desire. But could you at least not sigh before it!

"Please try your best to imagine and listen!"

"I'm listening, I'm listening."

"I've told you that I'm a man."

"I'm. A. Man. Riiight."

"Uhhh..."

I've taken care to speak softly for so long now, I slowly became unable to stop!

"Th-that's right! So if you throw yourself onto my bed, I-I-I might attack you! That's how much of a man I am!"

"..."

Alright, I'll teach you how scary men are just a little bit!

... is what I tried bluffing with all I had, but Shion-san didn't react.

"... i-if you say nothing, I'll be really, really troubled."

"No, you see, I thought 'try attacking me then' and waited."

Shion-san rolled over onto her back and put her plentiful body on full display for me.

What are you rolling over for, Onee-chan!

And what's with your breasts!?

This is violence!

"... what's the matter, Alice? Not going to come?"

The way she gives me that feverish look, Shion-san is staggeringly sexy...

I reflexively swallowed.

I'm getting a little dazed here, I think.

No, this is bad.

Or is it?

Shouldn't I rather be happy that my reactions are still normal?

Ahh, my thoughts are in a mess...

"O-Onee-chan, if you say that, I can't help it. I-I'm not going to regret... this."

I got up from the chair I'd been sitting on and slowly approached the bed.

My heart is strangely loud.

My head is pounding.

Eh, what's this?

It also feels like a regular headache.

What, was I this tense?

"Alice... isn't your face too red?"

"N-not true. Onee-chan, that bluff is really weak!"

Crossing the room felt like walking along the Great Wall of China, but I finally reached the bed.

There, I grasped Shion's face with both hands.

Ahh, somehow Shion-san is really beautiful.

I've always thought of her as my reliable family. But seeing her like this, she's a beautiful woman after all.

Then the world turned.

Eh. Wait. What?

"Alice...? Hey, don't tell me!?"

Shion-san shifted her gaze to my abdomen.

"Stupid! Why aren't you keeping track?

"...keep track?"

Of what?

Is there something with my abdomen?

Come to think of it, there's this slight discomfort... !?

"Hii!?"

As I looked down, my face turned pale.

I was bleeding like never before.

"Wha? I... was I shot? A sniper? Eh? Am I going to die?"

So fantasy worlds have snipers too, after all!?

Furthermore, the lack of pain makes it all the more scary!?

"Don't be stupid. Come on, we're going to the toilet!"

Shion-san nimbly got up from the bed and dragged me away by the hand.

Hey, dragging shot people by the hand, that's too much!

In the first place, I have healing magic!

"Hey! You're dragging me too much!"

But Shion-san didn't hear any of it and just kept dragging me to the toilet.

Being taken to the toilet by a girl, can I still call myself a man...?

After accomplishing the mysterious bleeding, my clothes were changed and I was put to bed.

Shion-san was really gallant.

"... uhm... am I beyond hope?"

Is it a bad illness?

And I was just reborn...

"What are you saying... Be more careful, Alice. Really, you're playing stupid too much."

Nono, I don't think I am.

"Does it hurt?"

"Hm? Not in particular, no."

"Good. But your face is still red, so you're still not alright."

"Ah, do I have a fever?"

"Seems so."

Fever, huh.

I see, so that's why I was dizzy.

"... eh? I wonder if I did something to catch a fever..."

The only time I stayed up late was the night I went to the ruins.

Other than that, I shouldn't have unreasonably strained my body...?

"Hehe, Miss I'm-a-man Alice, do you have something to say?"

"Haa?"

Eh?

Why are you looking at me mischievously, Shion-san?

"Oh, well. I guess you said something weird because you're under the weather. Take it slowly, Alice."

"Eh? Ah, yes...."

What...?

Leaving behind those vague words, Shion-san turned to leave.

But before she disappeared, she turned around once.

"I'll come check up on you once in a while. Also, to commemorate today, I'll tell mom to make something delicious, okay?"

"Haa..."

Leaving behind a smile, Shion-san left the room.

"..."

...

.....?

Well, yeah, let's calm down.

I'm not an entirely ignorant brat, either.

I believe to know about things somewhat.

And based on that, the answer the events so far lead me to is...

"My period..."

As I said it out loud, my head felt lighter and lighter and I really passed out like that.

When I woke up, my physical condition seemed to have improved a lot and nothing felt strained.

The pillow was wet from tears though.

Thanks to that, my head was a bit painful.



I was a bit curious, so I went to the toilet once more and then changed clothes.

I was lent quite a lot of clothes, partially because Aunty is a Tailor.

I would've been fine with anything, but if I wore something strange, it would affect Aunty's reputation.

A Tailor also has a Tailor's pride, I guess.

Ahh... but I'm going to wash them myself...

"Ah, are you alri-woah!?"

Shion-san came while I was folding my clothes, but when I turned around, she was exaggeratedly surprised.

"... is something the matter?"

"Ah, no but... Alice, your eyes... are a bit scary?"

Certainly, I feel a bit hollow myself right now.

I wonder though, what kind of eyes am I making?

"Hehe."

"W-what's the matter?"

"No, I just figured. Thinking about it, it's obvious. Of course god wouldn't take half measures when reincarnating me."

When I got up after putting my folded laundry into a basket, Shion-san drew back a few steps.

"Besides, I've started to wonder if that wasn't all a dream in the first place. Yeah."

The eighteen years in that world, I mean.

...

Like that could be the case!

I'm not growing senile here!

"I-I don't know what you're thinking, but if you're gonna be an adventurer, keep better track of your body, okay? Otherwise you'll be in deep."

"... I know."

I know that I know nothing.

I need someone who will support me.

Which leads me to Ilya again.

"Onee-chan, I think I'm going to save up money and go to the royal capital."

"The capital, huh. Certainly, I understand why you want to go."

"I also think about entering the combat tournament there."

"... I'm surprised you know about that. The combat tournament, huh. It's not even three weeks anymore, is it."

Then it'll be before my condition worsens again, right? I'd call that a good chance.

"Do you really know what you're getting into there? People die in that tournament. Of course I'm against it."

"Eh... people die there?"

Although it's a tournament?

I must've made a stupid face, because Shion-san laughed, as if she'd seen it coming.

"Nobody is blamed for accidents during the matches. Rather, it's the savage kind of tournament where the crowd is excited when people die."

Woah, looks like it would really be better to do something about the peace and safety permeating my thinking patterns, after all.

But still, saving up a fortune of 400.000 Rook is not realistic.

And yet I need Ilya.

No matter what anyone says, I need her.

"If it gets dangerous... I'll surrender."

"If you surrender, you'll have to offer the winner something of appropriate value. Currently, you have nothing, so if you're fighting a man... I don't have to speak further, do I?"

"That's low..."

"Hehe, I think a bit more self-awareness would suit you nicely."

Exasperated, Shion-san folded her arms and highlighted her breasts.

Yeah, self-awareness would suit you nicely, too, Onee-chan.

"... besides, you're not going to fight monsters. It'll be people."

"Yes... I thought as much."

I know what she wants to tell me.

Can someone spoiled like me really fight against people?

Thinking about it, I get no image at all.

I get the feeling that I can, but it might be impossible.

Could I shoot people with my magic?

"Alice, there's a good occasion. In three days, the guild here in Rinnal is doing a bandit hunt. Many of the skilled adventurers in the area are going to participate. I intend to, too, so, Alice——"

Shion-san stopped speaking once and gave me an emphasizing look.

"Are you going to come, too?"

A bandit hunt.

The other side will definitely consist of people.

And probably... the request will be dead or alive.

Of course, they will try to kill us without hesitation.

I will be faced with the killing intent of humans, not monsters.

"... let me participate, please."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes... it's dangerous, so I'd be worried about you otherwise, Onee-chan."

Like she was taken by surprise, Onee-chan suddenly had a baffled expression.

And then she blushed just a little bit.

"So cheeky.... Alice."

"Ehehe, probably, that's how little sisters are."

Also, it looks like I probably can't return to being a man...

This life in another world really gives me a lot to think about.

# Chapter 16

## Bandit Group

The guild that found the bandit hideout decided to carry out the extermination operation three days later.

There were explanations from the guild and cooperation between the parties was set up.

That being said, under these hurried circumstances it's nothing terrific.

At most, it's one group storming the hideout from the east and another from the west.

Some parties are in charge of encircling the hideout and taking on the escaping bandits.

That's it.

All in all, there are sixteen parties participating in the bandit extermination.

On the other side, we still don't know the exact number of bandits, partially because we don't want our moves to be noticed.

From the size of the hideout, they are assumed to be around thirty.

If they escape it's meaningless, but that being said, if we're not enough people, they'll turn the tables on us.

——it's quite a dangerous quest.

Still, they do a lot of damage on the roads and in the forests connecting Rinnal to the nearby cities. If nothing is done about them, it will become a hindrance to the citizen's everyday life.

Merchants wouldn't want to take these roads.

Following that, the town would decline.

You could very well say this situation is graver than it looks.

If you go to the royal capital, there seems to be not just the guild, but a proper knight order, but they move too slowly to be relied upon.

If you put in a request and go through all the required paperwork, they will come "some time" apparently, but frankly that's not good enough for the people.

"Hey, Shion. You sure about letting Alice participate?"

Before heading out for the operation, while checking our equipment at home, Uncle spoke up.

Shion, having looked at her own sword, thrust it into her sheath while turning around toward Uncle and clearly nodding.

"This is what she decided. As an adventurer."

"I know, but still..."

Uncle's face was full of worry as he looked at me.

... well, it's not like I don't understand how he feels.

I mean, so far I've done nothing but cause worries for them.

"Nichol-san, I'm just going to do what I can, so..."

... I'm not going to force my limits——

——is what I really wanted to continue with but nobody knows what's going to happen in the actual battlefield. I shut up.

"Uhh...huh. If it gets dangerous, think about yourself first and run away, ok, Alice-chan?"

"I know."

That's a lie.

There's no way I can.

If it gets dangerous?

Our party obviously consists of Uncle, Shion-san, and myself.

Shion-san's group takes part somewhere else this time, so it's a party of family members only.

A situation where I, forming the backline of the party, is in danger... I don't even want to think about it.

"——alright, let's go."

I stiffly nodded at Shion-san's words.

Before leaving for the capital, I want to give something back to these people, if only just a little.

I can attack at range. I'm sure I can be of use in a party with Shion-san and Uncle who both use swords.

For the sake of the people in this town, too, I will strike the bandits.

I don't have to think about the opponents.



I can do that later just fine.

Seen off by Aunty, we began the operation————

The bandits' hideout is on the other side of town, opposite from the forest with the ruins. After leaving town, we advanced while staying clear of the road.

On the appointed day, we left early in the morning, but some parties had already headed out the evening before.

The groups left town at so different times from each other to get into position.

Whether it helps or not, the goal is to trick the bandits at least a little bit.

Because we're not many people, our party's goal is to take part in surrounding the hideout and take on the escaping bandits.

However, there's a good likelihood to run into a lookout or some bandits happening to be outside, so it cannot be called safe.

"We're almost there," Shion-san said while spreading a marked map and checking the surroundings.

Next to the river flowing continuing on to Rinnal, just outside the forest.

The operation begins when the sun has reached its peak.

With watches, it would be noon exactly.

And that time is soon.

"... I hope the people assaulting the hideout directly are fine."

"There's six groups of six veterans each. But we can only pray."

"Yes..."

As expected, Shion-san was just as tense as myself.

Her eyes were attentively scouting our surroundings.

And Uncle, too, was leaning against a rock sized just right to sit upon, his eyes closed.

He might be listening for something.

As for myself, I couldn't rid myself of that bad feeling of foreboding assaulting me.

Our current mission was to wait, but I was restless if there wasn't something we should do.

I was restless in the truest sense of the word.

It wasn't the atmosphere to talk to Shion-san or Uncle, so for the moment I decided to calm down by changing the water in the canteen.

I went over to the river and submerged the canteen into it after dumping the old water.

By the way, the canteen is of course no bottle.

It's a leather bag.

"Hmm...?"

While submerging the water bottle in the river, I inadvertently looked to the other bank, and noticed something unnatural about the shade of a rock; something was off.

The river was around ten meters wide, but I could see a big rock on the other side shine weirdly.

Was it some reflection?

No, these light particles...!?

"MAGIC!!"

I at once shouted to the others.

Too late!

"Freezing breath, change to dancing blades—— Blizzard!!"

The man jumping out from behind the rock was singing his incantation.

The magic ice projectiles forming indeed turned into blades and poured towards us.

His target was——all of us!?

There is area of effect magic!?

From above our heads, icen blades rushed down like hail.

That's not something you can dodge.

"——"

To at least protect my head, I crossed my arms before my face.

Then I got skewered—— is the worst case I expected, but the shock I received was not that much of a worst case.

It was more along the lines of being hit my normal hail pebbles.

Of course, it still hurt.

But that was it.

At most, it might leave some bruises?

Why?

But looking at myself, I'm surrounded by something like a thin film of light.

Before the ice projectiles hit me, they hit the film of light and lose their power.

"So magic defense—— comes from Mind!"

Which means that the least injured in this place is me with my Mind 5.

On the other hand——

"Onee-chan!! Nicholl-san!!"

Especially Shion-san, she has Mind 0!

The moment the ice projectiles finally stopped, I turned around in horror.

"I'm fine!"

Without a single scratch on her body, Shion-san drew her sword.

Eh?

Not a scratch?

"Eh?"

No away.

She dodged... all of them!!?

"Are you a monster!?"

"Why are you insulting me here? ... Pops, you alright?"

While glaring towards the opposite shore, Shion-san called out to Uncle.

"Yeah, this is nothing."

Uncle slowly got up with his shield.

——but.

"——your leg!"

An ice blade was sticking in his leg!

Uncle was laughing that it was nothing, but he wouldn't be able to move like that.

Heal!

No, wait, the enemy on the other side of the river came first?

Without time to ponder, the situation evolved.

A group of people, probably bandits, came out of the forest.

Five people from the forest, a total of six with the man on the other side of the river!

"Tsk!"

They were a much more immediate danger than the man on the other side of the river.

Shion-san was rushing towards the bandit group.

Three of them had swords.

Two spears.

One mage on the other shore.

They had thought this through!

Thinking about cast time and cooldown as well as attack range, this was the optimal setup.

Supposing we didn't have anyone capable of ranged attacks, it would be onesided.

"..."

"...I know!"

Before attacking the enemy, Shion-san gave me one look.

I clearly nodded at the signal in that look.

Shion-san made a small smile in return.

When I looked back to the other shore, the mage had just finished his cooldown and began casting anew.

Like I'd let you!

"You're slow! Split the heavens and become a ray of light, to strike my enemies—— Thunder!!!"

I instantly fired my magic.

One serious strike with chanting the incantation at that.

Seeing me invoke magic without any sign of generating mana beforehand, the mage on the other side of the river made a shocked face—— and fell, without any chance to dodge.

That probably meant I completely surpassed his magic defense.

The film of light made no change whatsoever.

The result gave made me shudder for a second—— but.

That could come later!

Stopping my thoughts, I rushed to Uncle's side.

"The wound... oh my god!"

Uncle was drenched in cold sweat and the blade of ice was still stuck in his left thigh.

This went beyond painful!

Even the blood flowing out was on the verge of freezing, this might lead to frostbite.

"H-hey, you're amazing, Alice-chan. Nice skills!"

Come on come one!

"That doesn't matter in the least!"

What should I do?

Even if I use heal, I think I should pull the ice blade out beforehand.

But won't he bleed out then?

But either way, like this he'll get frostbite.

"Give me that, please!"

I borrowed Uncle's swords and cut off a piece from my robe's skirt.

That made it a lot shorter, but that *really* didn't matter now.

I could use that in place of a tourniquet.

I tied it at the left leg's base with all my strength.

"Ghhh... I'm! Too weak...!"

Is this going to be enough?

If it's not really tight, it's pointless!

"I just need to tie this, right?"

Uncle laughed at me with his dandy face and tied the tourniquet once more himself.



"Y-yes! It's only for a short while, but make it as tight as you can!"

"Sure thing! Nnnngg!"

With his face contorting in pain, Uncle tightened the tourniquet.

The rest...!

"Sorry, please bear this!"

I grabbed the blade of ice and pulled it out in one go.

"Guaaahhhhhh!!!"

For that Uncle to cry like that, it must hurt a lot.

It makes me feel sorry.

But there's no point if I fail after all this.

After drawing out the ice blade and discarding it, I took a breath and willed the activation of another magic.

"Goddess of earth, grant compassion with your healing breath——  
Heal!!!"

When I held my hands near the wound and chanted the magic, pale, white light enveloped it.

The wound which had had blood trickling out of it gradually closed.

However, the wound was deep.

Not something healing right away.

And you can keep the magic Heal active over time—I understood that right then.

You can probably decide to, depending on the wound.

However—I felt how incredibly exhausting it was.

The mana inside my body was rapidly flowing out.

Now just that, my stamina was taken as well—or maybe I gave it to him?

Anyway, I quickly got dizzy.

"Ngg."

Should I cancel it once and cast it once more?

No, Shion-san is still fighting, don't be so weak!

Show some spirit!

But I'm really collapsing now—on the verge of that, I somehow completely closed the wound.

"Haaaah... how is it? Do you think the leg will be alright?"

"... amazing."

Uncle was touching the area the wound had been like he couldn't believe it.

"Looks like you're alright... thank god. Ah, please take off the tourniquet."

Uncle took it off and carefully got up.

Then raised his left leg a bit and stepped down.

"Hmm... it's a bit uncomfortable, so it's not completely recovered, but it's good enough."

Well, I'd be scared if it was already completely healed.

As relief overcame me, I noticed for the first time that I was too tired to even get up.

And like that, I went plop.

I let myself fall backward spreadeagled, as they call it.

"...nice view youch!!"

Shion-san knuckled Uncle over the head.

"I've got one amazing little sister, don't I, Pops?"

"Wawa"

After setting Uncle straight, Shion-san proceeded and tousled my hair, no holds barred.

"... if you put it like that, that should make her my daughter, too."

"You don't look at her like a daughter, stupid pops."

"Y-you're wrong!"

"N-nono! More importantly, the bandits?"

Stopping those two as they turned towards a weird topic, looked towards the forest.

"Eh? That is...?"

In the direction Shion-san was pointing were five falled bodies.

".....are you a monster?"

I'm never going against Onee-chan.

I secretly swore that to myself.

# Chapter 17

## Living Legend

"For an ambush, they were way too prepared."

Next to the pondering Shion-san, I borrowed Uncle's cloak and wrapped it around my waist as a makeshift pareo to compensate for the shortened skirt.

"Didn't some of the guys who departed last night just get themselves captured and questioned?" Uncle suggested, but Shion-san was not convinced. Or so said her face.

Still, don't say such scary things so easily, Uncle.

"Doesn't feel right, but... I'm just surprised that this run-off-the-mill bandit group had a Mage."

Shion-san looked at the bandit collapsed on the other side of the river.

She tried getting a reaction out of him, but he didn't even twitch.

It's probably too real to be playing dead.

When he fell, his face ended up under water to begin with.

That nailed it.

"..."

Shion-san turned toward the bandits she defeated.

There's... no way she used the back of her sword, is there.

The traces of blood are obvious to see.

It's just... I'm calmer than I thought I would be.

Although I don't want to see them up close.

Still, I wonder if my feelings are just numbed for the moment.

"At any rate, it's fishy. What do you think, Shion? Go back to the relay point and report? Or should we wait a bit and see?"

It's obvious how much Uncle trusts Shion-san.

Well, so do I.

The bandits' hideout is a cave in a little cliff a bit into the forest.

But the forest is dense, and as it's away from the road, it's no place you'd just get close to.

Being just outside the forest as we are, we have no idea of the situation of the assault parties.

If we wait here, the escaping bandits will come to us. Maybe.

Or they might not.

"Well, the operation should've just begun, so waiting and seeing is probably the correct decision, but..."

While thinking, Shion let her eyes cautiously roam over the forest and the opposite shore.

Earlier I happened to find the enemy first, but fundamentally Shion-san never let her guard down.

"...when things smell fishy——"

"Trust your gut. Man, I've raised such a tomboy."

Uncle smiled wolfishly.

"Yeah, yeah, I am your daughter, Pops."

"True, that."

As the two reached an agreement, their eyes gathered on me.

"We are now going to check out the hideout. Alice, you go home."

I'd thought they were going to say that.

"Don't you think it's more dangerous to return alone?"

"No, I don't think it's more dangerous than getting closer to the hideout."

"How about returning together once? Nicholl-san isn't at his best."

"You've got me there."

Uncle grinned embarrassed and scratched his cheek.

"But, Alice-chan. We can't miss this chance at the bandit group."

The town itself might go on decline.

You can't just ignore that.

This request isn't fun and games.

I felt like I'd been hit by cold water.

"..."

"Hehe, don't make those eyes, Alice. You've done more than enough already."

I know myself that my displeasure is showing on my face.

Or rather, I'm worried about the two.

"Please, Alice-chan. Reporting that the situation is fishy is a fine job, too, you know?"

"...okay."

It's no good.

No matter what tantrum I throw, I can't convince those two.

"Alright, just as you said, we've got no idea what might happen on your way back. You realize that letting you go alone in spite of that is because we trust you that much?"

"You're unfair, putting it like that..."

I laughed, and Shion petted my head.



"You two be really careful, okay?"

"I know."

"Gotcha. Can't keep showing you just my uncool sides, can I, Alice-chan."

I never particularly thought of Uncle as uncool, though.

"See you later, then"

"Yeah."

"Gotcha."

After seeing the two off, I once more looked towards the bandits' corpses.

Looking at them on my own, they are scarier than before after all.

I forced my feelings in a different direction, turned my back towards the forest and started walking.

When I arrived at the relay point, I thought bingo.

The relay point was a simplistic hut built for travelers on the road to rest in.

I call it a hut, but everything's completely visible from the outside. Four wooden pillars holding a roof over a group of logs for chairs, that's all.

It's kinda of reminiscent of the open pavilions you can find in some parks.

What was strange is that the guild employee who was supposed to be on standby there was absent.

Looking around, there was nobody nearby either.

For the set relay point to be vacant is extremely unnatural considering the importance of this plan.

I checked the map I'd been given again, but I probably was in the right place.

I properly followed the landmarks according to the map and came here.

Following the road from here, the town wouldn't be that far away.

Thinking wouldn't change anything, so I could only go on all the way there and report directly in the guild.

"——Oy, little girl."

"——!"

For a second I thought my heart would stop.

Turning around, and I really have no idea when she came, there stood a girl even smaller than myself.

I reflexively readied my rod, but as if to show she wouldn't do anything, the girl showed me her empty hands.

"W-hat is it? How did you..."

"... thou better refrain from returning to that city now. Thou will die."

"... haa?"

"Timing when your warriors left earlier, a group of ruffians made for the city in return."

"Wh——at, are you saying..."

I reflexively looked in the direction of the town.

"That... smoke!?"

I was still a distance away so I couldn't be sure.

But... that was...!

"There was that sagacious darkelf... although she is a disgrace."

At that moment, I noticed the girl's special features for the first time.

Blond hair gathered in two pigtails.

Peeking out from that, pointed ears.

And eyes blue as the clear sky, no, more like the deep, blue sea.

"You... no way, an elf!?"

"Slow, aren't thou. Although one has no memories when one appeared in human habitation the last time."

Contrary to the girl's lovely appearance, there was nothing childish about the way she spoke.

"But time presses. One has to deal with the village's shame."

"You're trying to save the town?"

"Make no mistake. One is acting upon one's own issues. The human habitation is of no concern. ...but it might be saved along the way."

"... are you strong?"

Strong enough to take on a bandit group on your own?

"Hehe, for a little girl like thee to ask, time must have passed."

Time? What are you saying, you look younger than me.

But still, as an elf...

"One is Tillbell Aynshaura. They used to call me the Witch of Ice and Snow, once upon a time."

Puffing out the chest she clearly had less of than me, the girl answered my question.

But...

"Never heard of it."

"... this is why the young ones these days are."

Maybe I had hurt her feelings, but the girl suddenly started towards the city without minding me any longer.

"Wait, please!"

"... what? One said time is of the——whaa!?"

I grabbed the elf girl's hand and started running.

"That's why it's not the time to be walking!"

"But thou were holding one up!"

"Don't mind the small stuff!"

"And thou are completely ignoring one's warning!"

"There are times when one can't listen!"

Shion-san and Uncle are out.

The guild members are headed for the hideout.

I have no idea where they passed each other, but at the moment, the town is defenseless.

There is a militia, but it isn't that big.

It's just some rural town after all.

Who would protect Auntie?

Who would protect Eleanor-san and the others?

And Ilya?

"... hey, little girl. What is thy name?"

"Alice!"

"... this mana..."

The girl was staring at me with her blue eyes.

"Interesting. Alice! I especially allow thee to accompany one. Call one Till."

For some reason, the girl was happily laughing.

"Well thank you. But you——Till, you're really strong, aren't you?"

If she is just a young girl of the age she looks like and acting old, I'm committing complicity in murder here.

"Well, strong enough to not futilely waste stamina like thee."

Speaking of which, I had thought the little girl was keeping up well considering I was dragging her along.

"You're running... on top of the air!?"

The girl's feet didn't touch the ground.

And every step of this girl running through the air was long, like she was jumping. She was easily keeping up with me.

No, rather it was on a level where she was matching her pace to me.

"One cannot fly through the sky, but if it's temporarily running..."

Whenever she landed in mid-air, there was something like a wave of cold.

They say colder air is heavier, so it falls.

So by smashing the cold air towards the ground, she created a repellant force to use.... is that the explanation?

Either way, she was clearly exceptional.

"... I'll not think about it too deeply. If you're strong, that's good enough for me!"

"Yes, hurry. Before it is too late for both on both ends."

...both ends?

While running, I reflexively looked in the direction of the bandit hideout.

"...be safe!"

I can only believe.

I only have one body after all.

I strongly gripped the girl's——Till's hand and ran even faster.

# Chapter 18

## Snow dancing in the Flames of War

My throat hurts.

Breathing is painful.

I don't have enough oxygen.

And if that wasn't enough, because of that I'm probably wasting breath to boot.

Feels like hyperventilation.

When doing strenuous activity for a long time, there comes a point where how you *breathe out* becomes important.

And currently I don't have the specs to run long distance to begin with.

It's pointless if I can't fight when I reach the city.

On the other hand—if I'm too late, it's pointless too.

So I desperately ran towards the town, going up in a blaze of fire.

"Hah, ha, ha..."

After reaching the gates, I stopped, supporting myself on my knees.

I was very well aware suddenly stopping like that is not good for myself, but I abided my screaming body which didn't want to move another step.



Crisis or not, I was at my limit.

"... no matter how much time passes, no matter where one goes, it ends up like this," Till muttered loneliness and let go of my hand.

"Wheeze, wheeze... Till?"

I felt like dying already, but Till only looked at me like some insect.

Stop it!

You're crushing my heart!

"Weakling. Come after taking a break. After this is over, I will drill thee until thou wish thou were dead."

"Wait..."

I tried to call her to a stop, but Till only laid a finger on my mouth.

"One is not so weak to be worried about by one's disciple. Even if one retired long ago. Rest a bit before thou come. Is that well?"

With those words, Till ran through the air into town.

"Ha, ha... disciple?"

No, more importantly this endurance...

In an emergency, I cannot do anything with it!

Heal... would be pointless, wouldn't it.

Oh well, I can only remain here until I've caught enough breath to be able to walk again.

DAMMIT!

Weakweakweakweakweak!!

What's with this weakness, I'm not the world's strongest at all!

I allocated my Attributes and Skills as I saw fit, but putting that to use, or not, depends on me now.

But this body's unreliability pisses me off!

"O... kay... I'm fine..."

While breathing with heaving shoulders, I put one foot before the other.

I have to, protect Aunty.

In place of, Shion-san and Uncle—————

I'd known.

For a while even.

But after entering the town, that imagination changed into certainty.

The blood and the screams, the smell of burning buildings and "somethings" brought be to the edge of puking.

Robbing, killing, burning.

This...

Is this something people are doing!!?

"Aunty..."

Cutting across the main street, I hurried home.

So far, I hadn't run into a bandit since entering the city.

There were some ice-encased corpses looking like bandits lying around, but it went without thinking who was behind those.

Anyway, home!

Whipping my screaming body forward, I hurried home.

Like that, I finally arrived.

It wasn't burning... but the door was open!

The anxiety almost crushed me.

My reasoning came up with all the bad scenarios.

I basically jumped inside————

"————Aunty...?"

There were two people.

In the living room where I'd always laughed with Shion-san, Uncle and Aunty, in the living room where we'd bantered, there were two people.

One was a bandit in boorish clothes with a blood-stained... those round swords, a scimitar?

Anyway, he had a blood-stained weapon in his hand.

And the other———a figure lying on the floor that I knew well.

"Y..."

The world turned red before my eyes.

"What!? Amazing! There was such a beauty left!? Lucky!"

Seeing me, the bandit was delighted.

Disgusting!

"———You're dead!! You animaaaal!!"

"Argh...!?"

With a single thought, I released magic against the bandit defenselessly coming towards me.

Without restraint, without regret, without mercy, only with clear intent to kill.

Even without the incantation, the effect is enough.

With one strike, I sent him to hell.

I didn't feel anything about it.

I wordlessly walked towards the fallen bandit———and stepped on his head.

What should I do?

What should I do!?

I haven't had enough.

I haven't killed enough!!

I want to tear him to shreds!!

"..."

My eyes fell onto the scimitar in the bandit's hands.

"...I'll cut you to pieces."

I grabbed the blood-stained scimitar and——

"...D... don't... do it. Alice... chan."

"!?"

I dropped it.

Who gives a damn about murder weapons.

With all my power, I turned around.

"Don't get... swallowed up."

"Aunty!"

Even with blood flowing out of her chest, Aunty smiled at me with her never-changing warmth.

She's alive!

She was still alive!

"Run away... Alice... chan... cough."

Aunty had been stabbed in the chest.

Her heart... was probably alright, but it was in that area.

No, if her lungs overflowed with blood...!

"I won't run! I'll save you! As long as you're alive!"

Focus.

This time, it's okay if you collapse.

"———Goddess of earth, grant compassion with your healing breath!!!"

I poured the miracle of healing into the stabbed chest.

One moment later, dizziness assaulted me.

The wound was too deep.

Uncles had been nothing in comparison.

I felt my mana and my stamina being drained to the bone.

Probably, Heal is lower class magic when it came to healing.

Mages don't specialize in healing, I can't help it.

That's right, I can't help it.

I can't help it.

But with "I can't help it" is not enough for Aunty's life!

"I'll definitely!"

They are the saviors that took me in, cared for me, made me family, without knowing a thing about me.

Uncle, Aunty, Shion-san.

Without this family, I'd definitely be dead by now.

Like I'd let some bandits do something to them!

"Oh? What's this? There were some women after all!"

"Seriously?"

"\_\_\_\_\_"

Two new bandits came through the entrance.

This was the worst.

Cancel——yeah, like I can do that!

I'm fighting for every second here!

I have no time to spare to attacking!

"Please leave! Right now... I don't have the time to... deal with you!"

I was about to fall unconscious to begin with.

To remain conscious, I strongly bit my lip.

It hurt too much.

That taste of blood and the pain somehow bound me to reality.

"Hehe, now this is a good woman!"

"Hya, don't stay there, play with us!"

With vulgar laughs, they came closer.

What should I do!

I really don't have time to deal with you now!

...

"I'll take you on later, so please, leave us alone right now!"

I wanna die, really!

I should've learned Double Cast!

No, just how much has Cast Time Reduction saved me already?

And before that, right now I'm having my hands full with heal, there's no way I have room for Double Cast!

"Can't have that, missy—you're a Mage, right? That makes now our chance, doesn't it."

Dammit!



Damn those bandits, I'm out of options!

The bandits came closer and closer.

But of course, I had no intention of escaping.

I didn't.

Ahh... so these guys are going to make me their plaything

Such brutes are going to make me their plaything.

I can't even cry anymore...

One of the men's hands reached for me————and was run through by a spear.

"——eh?"

"GYAHHH"

Screaming out pathetically, the bandit rolled over the floor."

"What the!?"

In a panic, the other turned towards the entrance from where the spear had come flying.

I'd also confirmed.

The person who had thrown the spear from entrance.

"——Please refrain from touching Alice-sama."

Blond hair, green eyes.

That courteous manner of speech.

Those features you never forgot once you've seen them just once.

"Ilya!"

Why is she here?

No, now isn't the time to ask why, is there?

"I am late, Alice-sama. Here I come!"

No, Ilya hasn't fought before, has she!?

"You bitch! I'll hurt you for what you did!"

The unwounded bandit drew his scimitar and rushed at the unarmed Ilya.

I was in a predicament myself, but seeing others in trouble is bad for my heart!

When the bandit charging at her swung down his scimitar, Ilya glided forward, grabbed his arm and used his momentum to throw him.

———Aikido!?

"Urg!?"

The man moaned as he smashed into the floor.

Ilya had Agility 1.

But her movements——okay, they hadn't been that fast.

In the end, she had matched his timing and naturally slipped inside his reach.

Amazing Ilya!

"——I'll kill you, bitch!"

The bandit who had taken Ilya's spear to the hand went into a frenzy and slashed at her.

Ilya was still off-balance.

"Watch o-"

The scimitar cut into her.

That's what I thought.

I, and the bandit, too.

"... Haa?"

The bandit was surprised, and my mouth didn't close, either.

Ilya——

"Too light."

She had stopped the scimitar with one arm.

With her slender arm.

Had I done that, the arm would've been off.

For certain.

While we were dumbfounded, Ilya glided forward and switched places with the bandit. Now in front of me, she picked up the dropped spear and skewered the bandit with it.

"Grgrl"

"Hiii!"

Seeing that, the thrown bandit ran for the door to escape, but that's where his life ended, too.

"What an eyesore," said the man with a look in his eyes so mean you'd take him for a bandit. Blackie.

"Solt... san?"

With the daggers in both his hands, Blackie had cut down the bandit in an instant.

"Why are...?"

"Hah, I'd have a problem if you died on me."

Blackie didn't meet my eyes and looked away.

"Thank you... very much."

Is he a tsundere?

Nono, even if he is, does that mean I have to do something?

I don't want any men!

But I'm still thankful!

Really.

But now————!

"Please, be safe!"

While thanking Ilya and Blackie, I focused on healing.

I wonder how long I've been at it now.

Mana and stamina have crossed the limit already.

It feels like the lacking mana is compensated for through stamina.

I'm on the verge of blacking out.

Whittling away my life, I'm saving Aunty's.

Without exaggerating, that's how it is.

"————cough, Alice... chan"

"Aunty"

She made it!

Aunty still seemed far from her best, but compared to before, her smile was far more relaxed.

"Alice-chan, you're... so amazing..."

"Aunty!?"

"She is alright, Alice-sama. I believe she just fell asleep."

On Ilya's prompt, I checked Aunty's condition.

Certainly, her expression was calm and her chest rising and falling.

She was breathing!

"I... saved her...?"

On the other hand, I was in blank amazement.

"Yes. As expected, Alice-sama!"

"I saved her..."

"Alice-sama's devotion and loveliness were very radiant to me."

However, they say people who don't treasure themselves cannot save others.

"Eh...?"

Strength left my body.

Not listening to my will any longer, my body crumbled to the floor.

I couldn't even speak anymore.

My consciousness became vague.

Did I... push myself too much...?

"Alice-sama! Oh no, you exhausted yourself too much!

Ilya embraced me.

I still couldn't move.

Ahh, too late, my consciousness——

"——Please excuse me, Alice-sama. You can scold me for this later!"

With those words, Ilya bent over me.

.....

"Eh——h!?"

Ilya kissed me.

Only that fact filled my mind.

"Nn..."

Ilya's beautiful face was flushed.

My thoughts couldn't catch up, so I let her do as she pleased.

Just, I felt something hot flow from Ilya's mouth into me and fill me throughout.

Energy welled up.

From the verge of unconsciousness I thought I almost wouldn't wake up from anymore, my consciousness stabilized, too.

As my consciousness stabilized, I couldn't help but wonder and wonder about the feeling of Ilya's lips.

Kisses... did they really feel this good...?

"Ha-a... once more, please excuse my behavior. Alice-sama."

"Ah..."

For a moment, I thought it was too bad that Ilya had stopped kissing me and apologized.

"... oy."

"!?"

Blackie's voice made me come to my senses.

My body was moving.

I pushed Ilya aside and stood up.



"H-how is the situation outside!? We have to hurry and beat those bandits!"

"Just have a look."

Blackie urged me to, so I quickly left the house.  
For the moment, Ilya and Auntie were left inside.

"This is...?"

When I came outside, everything had turned into a winter landscape.

The burning buildings had all been extinguished.

An impossible amount of sudden snow.

But it was gentle snow.

It stifled the fires and gently wrapped up the town.

It was doubtlessly snow, but touching the flakes falling from the sky, they were so very warm.

"Amazing..."

I instinctively recognized it as magic.

In the time I saved one person, Till had saved the whole town.

What a contrarian of a elf.

What amazing magic.

While watching the snow dancing in the air, I only had one thought.

One day.

# Chapter 19

## Phantasmal Roar

We carried Aunty to bed and took a rest for a moment.

I couldn't carry her alone and show off, so I had Ilya help me.

I'd already checked her breathing before, but I did it once more to make sure.

"Hm... she's alright, isn't she," I murmured, as if to reassure myself.

"I believe she will be alright. That was a wonderful spell, Alice-sama."

"T-thank you."

Ilya sure acts normally—

Should I think of that as something like artificial respiration?

No, I'm sure it was something along those lines, but still.

What on earth has she...?

"Ilya, earlier... what exactly was that?"

"I am very sorry, Alice-sama."

"No, it's not like I'm angry, how should I say this, I feel like thanks to that I was able to get better?"

Oh Ilya, you're not even my slave yet but you're so polite to me already.

"That is, uhm..."

While avoiding me with her emerald eyes, Ilya hesitated.

I see, so she can't reveal her circumstances just like that, either. Just like me.

"Sorry, forget it. But you really did save me there. Thank you."

From the point she saved me from the bandits, actually.

Actually, Ilya is damn strong!

Isn't she stronger than me?

Well, I won't lose at ranged combat though!

"No, such praise is wasted on me."

"You're so stiff..."

Well, if I do manage to buy Ilya, our time together would increase and we'd could get closer or used to each other, I guess.

"By the way, how did you know where I was?"

"While I was fighting alongside the Firm's combat slaves, I spotted you running through the streets right away, Alice-sama... because you stand out."

Finding it somewhat hard to say, Ilya turned her face away.

...wait a sec.

"... did the bandits coming after me perhaps follow me?"

Ilya awkwardly nodded in affirmative.

Ohh.

The seeds that I sowed...

Nono, looking at it in hindsight, I also didn't have a moment to spare.

"...ah."

"?"

Come to think of it and looking at Ilya's arm, there was a cut after all.

Well, usually speaking stopping one slash from a scimitar with your arm wouldn't lead to just a little cut.

Her arm is so resilient I almost wanted to shout out "What exactly is your body made of?"

"Please show it to me."

"Ah, no, such conc-"

"Just do it."

I forcibly took Ilya's arm and laid my hand on the cut.

"——Heal."

It wasn't such an exhausting wound.

Thus it closed right away

Actually, bruises are scary because of infections and so.

"Thank you... very much..."

"No, I wish I could do more for you."

To pay her back.

But it was mysterious.

I kept holding Ilya's arm like that and carefully stroked it a bit.

Her skin was so smooth.

It was soft, and you wouldn't call her muscular.

Or rather, her arm was delicate.

"Excuse me..."

"Ah, I'm sorry! Curiosity got the better of me."

I let go of Ilya's arm as she gave me a troubled look.

Uhhhm.

What's the secret behind her Protection 5?

Something doesn't quite add up.

Is she not human?

"Oy."

"Ah, yes?"

From beyond the door, Blackie came in to check up on us.

"The Firm's combat slaves are looking after this house. Relax, they won't lose to some bandits."

"Eh?"

My wonderment at why the Firm went so far must've shown on my face and been seen through by him.

Is there a merit for the Firm in protecting this town?

"In return, I'm going to take this one with me. It seems Bertrand is having a tough time on the meadows outside of town."

So Ilya alone is more important than the combat slaves outside?

That weird. Wouldn't that mean the price she's being sold for is too cheap?

Is there... something?

"Are bandits still left?"

"Nahh, you can probably say the bandits have been wiped from the town. The firm and the guys from the militia are making rounds to make sure."

Then what are they having a hard time with?

With the sharp look in his eyes grim as always, Blackie managed to squeeze out one phrase.

"——it's a dragon."

After reaching the large street, we could bodily feel its stature and roar even if we didn't want to.

The dragon was magnificently reigning over the meadows where I'd been attacked by a puppy in the very beginning.

"Tsk, it's already come that close."

As Blackie said, earlier I hadn't felt those roars or the tremors coming along with them.

No, had it even existed in the first place?

Had it suddenly appeared?

But as a reality, right now it was there. That phantasmal life form giving off an overwhelming pressure.

This may be a fantasy world, but I didn't expected meeting one quite this soon.

My experiences so far were plenty unreal already, but this takes the cake.

It's so huge I can't quite believe it exists in this world.

Had dinosaurs still been alive, it might've been different, but the biggest I've seen were the elephants in the zoo.

It's still ways away, but... isn't there something wrong with my sense of perspective?

It has the intensity of a moving house...

"We have to make Aunty and the people in the town evacuate!"

"——thou can leave that to the people who are supposed to deal with that"

I was talked to from the sky.

The one who landed next to me was Till.

Her way of movement is really too peculiar. She keeps surprising me, this girl...

But more importantly!

"Till!"

There was any number of things I wanted to say to her, but her eyes signaled me to shut up.

Uhh... she's only a little child, but somehow I can't oppose her.



"You bitch! Are you an elf!?"

Seeing Till, Blackie got furious.

Which reminds me, Till doesn't try to hide what she is.

Couldn't she easily hide those lovely, pointed ears if she wanted to?

She just has to let down her hair.

Well, the twintails are cute though.

I suppose Till doesn't care much about our circumstances.

At any rate, my ears aren't particularly pointed, I arbitrarily confirmed by touched them.

"Thou are noisy, black one. Can't thou understand now is not the time? Before barking, thou would better help with the evacuation."

With a jerk of her chin, Till called attention to the dragon.

And I completely agreed with her.

"Oy, Alice, right! We're going to talk about this later!"

"Ehh—"

But I only just met her, too—?

Even if we talk about her, nothing will come of it...

Blackie gathered the nearby people from the Firm and instructed them to help as many people escape as possible.

Actually it would be better for Aunty to rest, but I asked them to help her take refuge, too.

But seeing that dragon, I couldn't stop where I was.

And when we had finished giving some rough orders and it was finally time to do something about the dragon...

"——Oh my, oh my, having a little chat all together? How very relaxed of you."

Suddenly a voice came from the empty air.

"Teleportation magic? Thy ways are vulgar as always..."

"I don't appreciate you deprecating the legacy of the past... I am a researcher of the truth. There is nothing vulgar about it."

A little distance away from where we were gathered, a magic circle formed in mid-air.

It reminded of the magic circle seen at the Ruins in the forest.

Then the air warped——and a woman appeared.

"It's been a long time, hag of ice and snow."

"So thou dare come and show thy face, Libra."

Only Till responded like it was normal; Ilya and I, even Blackie were too taken aback to be able to move.

The woman had dark-brown skin and eyes red like dripping blood.

Her hair was silver, or rather, white.

Only, it was so glossy it didn't look white, and it was long.

That hair was gathered in a loose braid.

"So, just how many souls did thou use?"

Cold surged up from Till's body.

Her obvious anger made me swallow.

"Let's see. Less than I thought I would, I guess? All because of you, hag. That's why the dragon is half-assed, too."

I reflexively looked at the dragon that ominously made the earth rumble.

For the moment, the dragon was rampaging over the meadows outside town and it was probably the people from the Firm who were still fighting it, like Blackie had said.

Frankly I had no idea how to deal with it, and she called it half-assed.

But against something I was planless against... Till would?

"Thou really are a shame. It was one's failure to let thee live!"

"Ahaha, you're wrong, I'm a huge success! Thanks to you, hag, I'm revealing more and more of this world's truth!"

"Thou... what are thou searching? Why did thou come to a remote region such as this?"

"You're asking me? Ahaha, I've been itching to tell you, too! Having people who understand you listen is my greatest pleasure!"

Exposed to Till's cold anger, that abnormal woman continued laughing without concern.

She gave me the shivers.

"Right, right. I observed something! Just nearby, a little while ago there was a 'singularity'."

"A singularity, thou say?"

Lately...

Just nearby...?

"Isn't it an old story? People being spirited away, or on the contrary people suddenly appearing? I want to solve that mystery! Don't you think it's negligent for anybody with wisdom to ignore that, hag? You do, don't you!"

Now I trembled.

"For that sake, thou guided those ruffians, gathered souls, summoned the dragon and ransacked this place, is that it?"

I didn't want to think of it.

I didn't want anything to occur to me.

"Hmm, I guess that's how it is? No matter where I go, there are stocks of more than enough souls. I also don't know how to find the singularity yet. So all I can do is repeat trial and error like always, right?"

"——Thou are garbage."

"Oh! Ahaha! I'm not so overconfident to slug it out with you directly, hag. Bye!"

The instant Till raised her hand, the woman called Libra opened a magic circle and jumped in.

"I was happy, I really was, hag! So happy to meet you, you're cute as ever. Now enjoy the dragon to your heart's content! It's made from the town's precious souls! And while it's half-assed, it's a special one summoned where a singularity happened!"

Her figure faded, so Till lowered her hand.

——but there was another person charging.

"YOU BITCH! YOU BIIIIITCH!!!"

With a loud scream, Blackie jumped at the disappearing woman.

But his attack only futilely cut through air.

Till had already lowered her hand.

Of course it would've ended like this.

"Solt... san..."

His back trembling with anger seemed smaller than usual.

"... one does not approve of thy methods. That is one's absolute truth."

Till's whisper seemed somewhat sad, but she immediately directed her eyes upwards, at the dragon.

"Alright, we're stopping that. Lend me thy help, Alice."

"...of course. We're going to stop it. That is... something that I have to stop."

I was balling my fists so hard the nails cut into my palms.

"...? Oh, well. The black one over there and—the dragon lass. Thou are going to help, too."

"——!"

Ilya, who for some reason had hidden her presence so far as if to hide from Till, trembled.

"Dragon...?"

Really, just how many circumstances does everyone here have?

Making Solt-san tremble with anger.

Making Ilya scared.

Making Till sad.

Most likely, they all had hidden pain, but we all worked together to stop the dragon.

No matter how we felt inside...

# Chapter 20

## Ice Dragon

Right outside the town, you couldn't help but notice the dragon.

On the meadows lay corpses, corpses, corpses...

Members of the militia or the firm's combat slaves.

They fought with their lives and met that terrible end.

"Bertrand, fall back. We're somehow going to take care of the rest," Blackie shouted to Bertrand-san who was commanding the combat slaves.

Bertrand-san looked towards us, who had formed an impromptu party.

Only when his eyes fell on Till, they widened for just a moment, but he turned back to Blackie right away as if nothing had happened.

"Solt... Can you defeat it? That thing?"

A winged, four-legged reptile.

Not that I know if it can really be categorized as a reptile.

Anyways, it looks ferocious.

It had one horn and a mouth so wide it seemed it could swallow an elephant whole.

Its muscular body was covered with strong scaled that seemed to let no weapon pass.



The tail growing from its back gave felt like it could smash a house with one swipe.

That huge body was sometimes supported only on two legs and swung claws around that seemed like they could tear through metal.

And to begin with, it was just big.

It wouldn't be an overstatement to say that the difference in mass was also the difference in power.

There was no way it didn't scare you.

That was a dragon.

"If we don't do something, we're all going to die," Blackie replied easily and drew two daggers.

"You can talk... Miss. You're not going to fight, too, are you, Miss?"

"Bertrand-sama, I may not be up to it, but I have things I want to protect, too."

"Hmm. It may be bad style for an adult to fall back, but mistaking my role would be the height of foolishness. I shall take the combat slaves and help the evacuation."

"Please do."

Did he notice when to pull out because he was a merchant?

Both Bertrand-san and I had questions we wanted to ask the other, but now was not the time.

After the combat slaves completely disengaged from the dragon, Bertrand-san jauntily withdrew to the city.

The combat slaves mainly fought with bows, so their withdrawal was swift.

I had no idea how effective they were against the dragon, but they

surely must have annoyed it.

And thus, only we were left in front of it.

"\_\_\_\_\_"

I looked at us and the dragon.

When it laid its snake-like eyes on me, I got goosebumps.

Level 1 Ice Dragon

The enemy's Status floated in front of my eyes.

"An Ice Dragon... damn Libra, planning for one."

The deep blue scales were exactly right to call it an Ice Dragon.

But that being said...

"More importantly... Level 1?"

Somehow that makes me feel we can defeat it, am I imagining things?

"In the end, levels are nothing but an indicator how trained you are for your age. It's pointless to pay it too much heed."

Eh?

What's that all about?

"Here it comes!"

Blackie's voice was strained.

After watching the situation for a while, the dragon finally made its move.

First, an attack with its tail.

It roared and swung around that deadly weapon thicker than a tree.

For the dragon, it might just have been testing the waters, but for us, it wasn't funny.

Getting hit by that mass would turn us into minced meat at once.

...not that I want to imagine that.

I jumped backwards right away.

Till escaped into the sky.

—However.

"Take that," Blackie ordered Ilya.

Don't be stupid!!

"..."

Ilya obediently stepped forward.

"——With this body, I shall become a shield for all. Ancient Field!"

Ilya's body was wrapped in green light.

"Hoh... so the lass was an ancient dragon."

In front of us, Ilya was hit by the tail that alone was more than just a few times her weight.

It was so overwhelming, I couldn't make a sound.

But the surprising thing happened then.

Ilya——stopped the tail.

"——"

The shining, green barrier... -like thing stopped the tail in place.

The wind pressure from the inertia born from suddenly stopping that massive attack almost blew me away.

Although the person who stopped that attack in the first place didn't even take one step back.

Ilya... amazing.

"But like this, that lass...", murmured Till, who had landed next to me, while staring at Blackie.

That Blackie on the other hand had taken Ilya stopping the attack for granted and already charged at the dragon.

He made use of the opening the dragon showed as its attack was

stopped to slash at its abdomen.

"Tsk! Hard!"

Only a metallic sound rang out and there was no indication he had dealt the dragon any damage.

Blackie, who could be squashed under the dragon, promptly retreated behind Ilya.

"..."

I was annoyed.

"Split the heavens and become a ray of light, to strike my enemies!  
Thunder!"

Then how about magic?

My Thunder directly hit the dragon's huge body.

"GAHHH!" it screamed and writhed in agony.

It worked a bit?

"Hmm, Lightning attribute? So thou have a good affinity to it, Alice."

"Hey, don't just look on and do something, Till! You could easily defeat it, couldn't you?"

"Libra is behind this, she will surely have a countermeasure against one—but fine."

Like going up the stairs, Till took to the skies.

At the same time, her body gave off blue light.

Till's incantation!

"Third winter sending the world to demise, bring demonic ice to end it all——Fimbul!"

Being able to see that mana, it probably scared me the most of all of us.

Another order of magnitude, meant exactly this.

Earlier, Till had rained snow on the entire town. But it probably simply wasn't an option for Till to turn the whole town into ice.

The magic Till had chanted was fundamentally different from the low-class magic I was using.

Anyone can understand that.

But it wasn't just a difference in the magic, her basic mana was terrific, too.

And that's what I sensed.

That magic of Till's froze the air, brought a storm, became a blizzard of ice swords and assaulted the Ice Dragon.

It even froze exhaled air, an absolute zero not even allowing you to breathe.

If you take that attack, you won't get away for nothing.

I understood why she made me leave Shion-san's party and form

one with her.

Get dragged into that, and you'll die.

No doubt about it.

"Eh...?"

I had overestimated that overwhelming firepower.

Had thought the fight was over.

But the Ice Dragon's body was wrapped in blue light which intercepted——no, absorbed Till's magic?

I even thought it grew even bigger, more ferocious after taking Till's magic.

No, it wasn't just my thinking, it really grew bigger!

"Hmm... special-made, is it," Till displeasedly muttered and landed.

The Ice Dragon, now reminiscent of Godzilla and the like, swung its arm as if to swipe us away like insects.

Ilya took it, but——!

"Urg..."

"Ilya!"

Blood was flowing from Ilya's mouth!

"Dodge it, Ilya! Bearing those attacks is ridiculous!"

"I am very sorry, Alice-sama. I cannot move nimbly as everybody else. This is how I fight."

"!"

I see, Ilya's Agility... she's so strong, so I forgot, but that's the unchanging truth.

"Split the heavens and become a ray of light, to strike my enemies! Thunder!!"

My magic, unlike Till's, was not absorbed.

But how much damage I was actually dealing...

Blackie saw it as a chance and slashed at the dragon, but regretfully, his blades were warded off.

"Hm? Watch out!"

The Ice Dragon got on all fours and opened his mouth wide.

Only one thing came to mind.

"Its breath is coming! Step back, dragon lass!"

Standing in front of us, Ilya stared right down the dragon's throat.

"... I shall ward it off!"



"Thou one-sided fool!!"

From next to me, Till jumped to the very front——in front of Ilya.

"Till!?"

That's not what magi do!

But even if we were to run, the dragon could just turn its head and catch them with the breath. I couldn't move from behind Ilya.

I unintentionally watched the events unfold.

"Line up with the kings of the underworld, become a inviolable gate and ward off assault——Icicle Garden!!"

Along with the end of Till's incantation, we were surrounded by a barrier of ice.

In the next moment, the Ice Dragon breathed out.

The ice barrier took the breath straight on.

It sounded like the ghastly, thunderous roar when the house you're holing up in is directly hit by a large hurricane.

No, maybe it would be better to say it sounded like a house directly hit by a hurricane and creaking like it was about to be torn to shreds any second?

Either way, its power was unmistakably terrible. Watching behind us, ice bullets repelled by the ice barrier rained down on the town.

It sent a shiver down my spine, but now I could only leave it to Bertrand-san.

Inside the uncomfortable barrier, I finally felt the fury outside pass.

The dragon finished breathing and got back up on two legs.

"...phew, so one could defend against it. Had it passed the barrier, we would have all died."

"..."

I felt Till had whispered something terrifying, but let's not mind that.

Ilya passed by her and placed herself at the front again.

Till exasperatedly shook her head.

"We have no idea how long the dragon lass will last. One shall enchant thy weapons to strengthen them, black one, so take that down already."

"...alright."

"——could you strengthen mine, too?" someone called from the side.

"Onee-chan!!"

"Hey, Alice. Sheesh, why did you leave the party so suddenly? I was a little worried!"

"Ehm, as you can see..."

"I know, let me into the party again."

"Y-yes!"

I invited Shion as told.

"How did you get here?"

"Inside the bandit hideout, there was a magic circle. It teleported us to the top of the hill."

So that's how the bandits got to the town without meeting anyone!

So it really was that Libra woman's doing!

"Hmm... one doesn't know who thou are, but we don't need rabble?"

"You sure talk big with that cute face!"

That's right, Till!

My Onee-chan is the strongest human there is!?

"Oy, cut the chatter. Don't we have work to do?"

"One knows and is already casting."

The arrival of an all too reliable ally made me regain my bearings.

With one less worry, my positive thinking came back.

Ehm... come to think of it, aren't I forgetting someone?

Oh, I guess I'm imagining things.

# Chapter 21

## Fragments of Feelings

"Come, ice fairy, become my blade——Ice Enchant!"

With her left and right hand each, Till enchanted Shion-san's and Blackie's weapons.

...this is Double Cast, isn't it?

She just nonchalantly used Double Cast, didn't she?

"Oy, is it going to be okay with the Ice element?" Blackie asked the plausible thing.

Till just shrugged.

"Worry not, one only enchanted the strength of your weapons, one didn't give them the element. One understands that much. Though actually, if someone could enchant it with Lightning, matters would greatly differ..."

Yes, yes, I'm sorry, alright.

"... If I shoot Thunder at the weapons, it might stick! Sizzle sizzle! Let's try it, Onee-chan!"

"Yeah... let's not."

She declined!?

"Hah, as long as my blades work, I'll do this."

Without showing a shred of interest in me, Blackie headed for the Ice Dragon.

Well, Ilya's doing her best, so that's natural.

Yes, it's natural.

I'm not sulking or anything.

With a wry smile on her lips, Shion-san patted me on the head twice and shifted to attacking, too.

That's how you do it!

This difference in consideration, do you get this, Blackie?

"So, Till. Can I just keep attacking it with Thunder?"

Ilya's took the attacks of the raging Ice Dragon and created a safe area for Blackie and the rest of us.

Shion-san kept up fighting it in close quarters while dodging every single of its attacks.

Both of them had their lives on the line.

Not being able to do anything substantial vexed me and made me impatient.

"Hoh... Huge Boobs over there is good."

"Please don't ever call her that ever again."

"What are thou getting angry over? Oh, well, Alice! Currently, though are only able to cast that one spell?"

"Yes..."

Lying wouldn't change anything about it.

And Heal was something else entirely

As I was, I couldn't use any high-class magic, or support magic, like Till could.

I was aware that I was useless.

"Hehe, thou are so cute."

"...eh?"

"Nothing. Hey, Alice. Have thou ever learned magic from someone

before?"

"No, I haven't."

I raised my level, finally learned my spells, and figured the rest out myself.

"One wouldn't say one won't be your mentor, thou know?"

"Eh!?"

Come to think of it, before entering the city, she may have said something similar.

Although I find it a little mysterious why she'd set her eyes on me...

But more importantly, people were fighting at the moment!

Impatience welled up inside me.

It wasn't the time to worry long.

"My mentor! Please become my mentor!"

Right now!

"That is a commitment. Thou need to think well about whose disciple thou become. No matter how much in a hurry thou may be," Till smiled wickedly as she threatened me.

Still, I cannot think calmly in such a state of emergency.

——But I had thought it through.

I knew more than enough about Till's true power.

And moreover, although we hadn't known each other that long, I knew about her temperament, too.

"I would be proud to learn under a gentle person like Till."

"——Thou are embarrassing me," Till whispered and threw something to me.

I caught it in a hurry.

It was...

"A bracelet?"

It was a silver bracelet with a mysteriously glowing, expensive-looking golden jewel.

"Thou are so shallow. Put it on."

"Ah, yes."

I did wonder if it was alright, but obediently put it on anyway.

Not knowing if I should put it on the left of the right arm, I put it on the left one for the moment.

After I put it on my arm, it glowed lightly and tightened closely around my arm.

Like it was part of my body.

"...as one thought, thou could equip it."

"Uhm... this isn't the kind that I can't take off, is...?"

It fit so good to my body, I couldn't take it off no matter how much I pulled.

Don't tell me this was some cursed initiation!?

"That is called the Sylv Faeria. Well, it's the proof of being one's disciple. It raises the power of magic... or something like it."

"Eh? Is it alright for me to receive something so precious!?"

I thought in that case Till should use it herself.

But Till only laughed while watching the battle fold out.

"Thou may still not understand. The joy of watching others grow."

"Till...?"

"Now, hurry it up. Chant that Thunder thou are so good with."

Till pushed my back and sent me off.

"Wawa..."

And then I had a sudden thought.

I spontaneously turned around and asked her.

"Till... you haven't fought seriously at all yet, have you?"

If Till seriously gave it her all, she wouldn't lose, would she?

That's what had come to me.

"Who knows?"



She just laughed at me and had apparently no intention to answer.

By adding Shion-san, the battle situation had turned around

The one-sided battle had reached an equilibrium.

By taking the front position in turn, they gave each other leisure space.

When Ilya was at the front, Shion-san repeated hit-and-run attacks while taking it moderately easily.

On the other hand, when Shion-san was at the front, she drew all attacks on herself and dodged them, lowering the burden on Ilya.

Ilya had been completely exhausted, but she seemed to be recovering to a degree.

I keenly felt the importance of switching out the tank when fighting against strong enemies.

And this time, Blackie's attacks cut open the Ice Dragon's stomach and dealt damage to it.

Blackie wasn't as fast as Shion-san or as hard as Ilya.

But, it seemed his attack power was higher than the two's.

If it was higher than Shion-san's, that meant... Strength 4?

With weapons in both his hands, his style seemed to imply it didn't need any defense. It felt somewhat risky...

Anyhow, the cooperation of the three was outstanding, and compensating for the fact that it was their first combat together, you could feel their overwhelming sense for the flow of battle.

The Ice Dragon on the other hand didn't even have time for another breath attack.

——but the lack of a decisive attack on our end was true as well.

I stroked the bracelet on my left arm.

I should be able to do it.

In this situation, Till wouldn't do anything meaningless.

Saving the town while acting indifferent, worrying about Ilya and taking the the breath head-on, and then——she'd even looked at that woman with sadness in her eyes.

"——Split the heavens and become a ray of light!"

I raised my left hand and started chanting.

The bracelet started glowing.

And then, the light took at clear shape in front of me.

A golden pentagram.

It was floating in front of my left hand that was activating the magic.

"To strike my enemies!"

I myself felt how tremendous the amount of mana was.

It was... being amplified. Or rather, the image of my mana which I hadn't been able to put to use myself was being poured into magic, leaving none behind, was closer.

With this...

With this power, that simple dragon was...!

"Thunder!!!"

A flash shot out from the pentagon.

From its appearance, it wasn't something you could call it low-class magic anymore.

If the magic I had shot so far had been a gun, this was a cannon.

"...!"

The consumed amount of mana was enormous.

So far, I hadn't ever exhausted the mana inside my body with one Thunder.

But its impact was that much more tremendous, too——

"Gahhhhhh!!!"

Pierced by the lightning, the dragon writhed in pain like never before.

Having a living being the size of a house rage in front of you does have that great intensity, but...

But, we still hadn't defeated it?!

"...amazing," Shion-san looked at me with a smile.

Blackie glared.

Ilya's eyes were wide with surprise.

"But... repeating this..."

I couldn't shoot the next one right away.

Even though I thought that would end it.

Lately, I was fine ignoring the cooldown of a normal Thunder to a degree, but...

Not this one.

Would ten seconds cooldown be enough?

——But that thought really was too naive.

Like he had judged me to be the greatest threat, the Ice Dragon planted all fours on the ground and turned to me.

"Like I'll let you!"

Shion-san slashed at him, but the Ice Dragon didn't falter from the wounds.

Its big frame settled securely on the ground, it was unperturbed.

"Tsk!"

Blackie tried to cut down the dragon with the daggers in his hands, but even with furrows in its belly, the Ice Dragon didn't fall.

Does it let us cut its meat to break our back?

Seeing how it understood where the battle would be decided made me amazed at its instinct of the wild.

——Heyhey, do you want to kill me that much?

Will be you satisfied if you kill me?

Honestly, I——wonder how I feel about that

I'm scared to die.

Of course.

I don't like pain.

Am I returning to nothing after I die?

I'm even scared to imagine it.

Although even that fear might be pointless because you might not understand anything after you die.

But right now, being scared is natural, that's a given.

——But, it might be unexpectedly easy, too.

"...I have no idea, do I."

The Ice Dragon opened its maw.

The breath was coming.

My own preparations?

I get the feeling I won't make it by just a little bit.

This dragon had killed members of the militia and combat slaves.

But in the end, it might just have reacted to danger, too.

Suddenly, my hatred for the dragon lessened.

Then who should I hate instead?

That woman?

Or, after all...

———coming to this world half in fun, myself?

It's true that I hadn't ever imagined it would come to this.

A lot of townspeople must have died.

People bled to death, people burned to death, people crushed to death; I remembered those scenes.

I turned indifferent to it all.

And in front of my eyes, my judgement was finally prepared.

I thought my eyes met the dragon's.

The breath———came.

"———"

I thought I'd died.

I inadvertently closed my eyes.

Inside the darkness.

I thought "Oh?"

It took awfully long, so I opened my eyes.

"UWAAHHHHHH———!!"

"——I-Iya!?"

In front me me, Ilya was stopping the breath.

Unlike Till's barrier earlier she was literally——shielding me with her body.

The blades of ice and the brutal cannon balls coming with the force of a blizzard.

She was stopping them with her body alone.

"——didn't... you?"

"Eh...?"

In that storm of destructive ice and snow, Ilya squeezed out words for me

While under attacks too overwhelming for her delicate body.

Once more, clearly.

"You tried to die——didn't!?"

"——"

I had nothing to answer to that frail voice.

"I..."

Showing me her profile, Ilya glared at me while blood was trickling from her mouth.

"I won't allow you!! Because even I!!"

The courteous, mild-mannered Ilya was nowhere to be seen.

There was only a girl shouting the desire from the bottom of her heart.

"Because even I———want to live!!"

"Il-ya..."

The dragon girl had said.

——I want to live.

Could there be another desire that pure?

Once more, I tried reaching my guilty conscience.

I tried to remember.

For a moment, I tried to think calmly.

"...haha, what's this."

I put my feelings of guilt on a scales.



"I also wanted to live..."

The moment I said it out loud, tears welled up.

"——Split the heavens and become a ray of light, to strike..."

Really, I don't hate the Ice Dragon.

If anything, it might be a victim, too.

Have you been born just now?

Did you want to live more?

Ahh, come to think of it, this is the place where I first took a life.

I recalled the memories from that time.

I also recalled my pledge from that time.

Yeah, I really am bad with that.

But still, I'm sorry. I also.

—————I also want to live in this world.



Therefore——goodbye.

"My enemies! THUNDER!!"

The flash pierced the breath and enveloped the Ice Dragon.

And left a thundering roar on the beautiful meadows.

# Chapter 22

## Setting off

Three days had passed since the fight with the Ice Dragon.

To begin with the conclusion, the townspeople thanked me.

Because we repelled such a clear danger.

Apparently the militia had been wiped out.

The bandits who had remained at the hideout had been routed by Shion-san.

There seemed to have been a number of magi and there had been victims among the assault group, too.

Among them, the guild members attacking from a certain direction had been wiped out.

According to one member who had been nearby and luckily escaped, it had all been done by one dark-skinned woman...

Both that woman and the bandit group are gone now.

And while there had been damage to the town, it was along the way to regaining its peace.

I had gone around and checked if I couldn't help people.

It had been difficult, people being surprised by Heal and thanking me for it.

After all I may have been a reason for this whole mess. I really felt like running away.

But apparently only the priest in the single church and I can use Heal in this town.

...no, I'm certain Till can use it too, but asking that much of her would go too far.

Ostensibly, Till said she didn't want to get involved with humans.

Speaking of good news, Eleanor-san and her impertinent little brother Kal, as well as their family, were alright.

They cried when we met again inside the town. It was a bit overwhelming.

Anyhow, the more I was thanked, the more could I feel my smile cramp.

The three days passed in that fashion.

And in the third night, I was sitting on the bed, grasping my knees.

When depressed, why does that posture already make it a little better?

"...haa."

"Hey, I get why you're down, but really want to know: Why are you occupying *my* bed?"

Right, I was being depressed *in my sister's* room.

While sitting at her desk and writing a report for the guild, she had gotten tired of my ceaseless sighing and broached the topic.

"Don't mind those small things..."

"I really don't get whether you're depressed or not."

To begin with, does this time's incident have a causal relationship with me?

There's no information allowing a clear decision and I only have guesses.

But speaking from those guesses alone, you could say there is a causal relationship.

But it's also an endless like the question of the hen and the egg. It feels wrong for me to be depressed over it.

"Uncle and Aunty are?"

"I think Pops is still out, helping restore the town. But the fires went out pretty much right away and not many buildings were destroyed by magic, so I think they'll be done in no time."

With his hurt leg, Uncle hadn't participated in fighting the Ice Dragon and had gone help with the town's evacuation right away.

In the battle with the Ice Dragon, apparently there had been no human casualties from its deflected breath.

That's something to be grateful for.

"Mom was sewing something, I think. I did tell her to take it slowly, though."

"Is, that so."

Over the last three days, Aunty has recovered enough to live as usual.

Even if you close wounds with magic, it seems it takes time to recover the lost stamina.

But then, from the level of modern medicine in my former world, it was a miracle.

"——you know, thanks, Alice."

"..."

"But if I say so, you'll just feel down, won't you," Shion-san laughed and teased me.

"...how long are you going to keep doing paperwork? Aren't you going to sleep?"

"Ohoh, is this princess displeased? Wait, you're planning to sleep in my bed?"

"Right now, I desire human warmth."

It definitely wasn't anything to feel guilty over.

"Hehe, alright. Let's sleep."

"Wai-, so daring!"

"Why are you getting shy all of a sudden? You're so complicated..."

If I told her I said it just because, I think she'd hit me...

"Understood. Come at me!"

"Alice, are you really feeling down?"

Shion-san gave me a playful punch as she came to my side and we fell on the bed together.

Lying face-up, we watched the ceiling.

"... Onee-chan, you smell so good."

"Do I? I think you smell better though."

... that means my body and soul slowly diverge more and more, huh.

"Onee-chan, do you have someone you like?"

"Hehe, you're the age where you're interesting in love? You're such a maiden, Alice, having nightly talks about love."

"Somehow that take really annoys me..."

But Shion-san's pretty, and refreshing, and she has a good personality, and her breasts are big.

Her figure is nice, and she can fight, and she's gentle.

Just how amazing is she!?

"I've never really thought about it so far, I guess."

I'm sure if they heard this, a good portion of the men in town would cry.

"But lately, there's this person who I just can't get out of my mind."

"That little sister that makes so much work for you, you mean."



Even I can guess that much, yes, yes.

"Hehe, maybe."

Ah, but with Shion-san around, I really calm down.

My frayed heart is also being somewhat healed by her.

At the same time, reluctance to part wells up.

The people in this house are family to me.

Shion-san is precious to me.

Once more, I realized that.

"Onee-chan, tomorrow... I'm leaving for the capital."

"... I see."

"You're not surprised."

"That's not quite true. But I somehow had that hunch."

"... I see."

I'd wanted to travel the world in the first place.

But right now, more than traveling, I want to move to a safer town than this, to a better protected town than this.

I no longer think it's fine for me to die, I can't.

But to stop disastrous incidents from happening as much as possible, I think it's better to move to a more secure town.

In the royal capital with its knight order, it should at least be more secure than here.

"Do you have a plan?"

"Yes, Till's going to look after me."

To begin with, since I became Till's disciple, we have to be together for training me.

"That elf missy, huh."

"She's an awfully good girl."

Good girl. I have no idea if that expression is fitting, but what should I do, it just fits her appearance too well.

"I see... it's going to get lonely."

My chest tightened.

"D——," I start, but then I swallow.

"I've really... been in your care, so I'll at least leave some money."

"I don't need it. By the way, how much do you have anyway?"

"Till lent me some money, as an advance for the necessities."

"Hee, so that girl has money?"

"Yes, she gave me a platinum coin."

"Platinum!!?"

As one would expect, that made Shion-san jump up in surprise.

Platinum coins were the highest coinage in this world and were worth a hundred times as much as gold coins.

Well, in other words they were worth just that, a hundred gold coins.

"I've already used forty gold coins though, on something personal."

"Just how wild is your spending..."

No, really.

"I put a bag with fifty of the remaining coins in a drawer in your desk, Onee-chan."

"Heh, you're such a stupid. But I'll take it."

"I thought you'd say so. That's my Onee-chan!"

She really considered my mentality.

"I'm going to use it for getting the town back on track."

"Yes, I'll be happy if you use it for what you like."

I felt I had more or less said what I wanted to, so I rolled over to hide myself from Shion-san.

Behind my back, I felt Shion-san also lie down on the bed once more.

With nothing better to do, I touched the bracelet around my left arm.

I was uneasy about going to an unknown place, but the anticipation I had felt in the beginning was there, too.

My traveling companions could be trusted.

Tillbell Aynshaura.

Currently, for her stay she had taken a room in an inn in this town.

Among the names I've heard in this world, hers is the first with a last name.

Is she a noble in elven society?

Or do elves have different customs altogether?

Unknown lands, unknown customs.

I can interest myself for everything in this world.

In truth, the world before my rebirth also had many unknown things left, so I'm very self-centered.

But I finally felt *fired up* about something.

Although I hadn't just experienced good things, but a fair share of bad things, too, in such a short time.

Strangely, I don't feel the wish to return to my former world.

Just, in my former world I probably disappeared like I'd gone missing without in trace.

Like this, to my family *over here*, I can properly say goodbye before going on my trip.

Thinking about that, I at least want to tell my family in my former world that I'm doing fine.

And 'I'm going.'

At least that much.

"——Alice."

"...?"

While immersion myself in my thoughts before falling asleep, I was called to from behind.

The tone was unusually serious, but also gentle.

"Are you awake?"

"Ah, yes."

"Turn this way for a second."

Even though I had in fact rolled over because sleeping while facing Shion-san's way isn't too good for my mental health.

If she wanted me to, there was nothing I could do.

"...okay."

I heavily rolled over and turned the other way——in other words, Shion-san's way.

"——eh?"

For an instant I was hugged——and kissed.

"...on the forehead?"

On the forehead.

"Hmm? Did you want it on the lips?"

Seeing Shion-san's teasing smile up close, heat shot into my cheeks.

"S-surprise attacks are... bad for my heart..."

And what's with you anyway!?

Are you some handsome guy!?

I also want to do that!!

"Alice... no matter how far apart we are, you'll always be important to me."

"Yes... I also love you, Onee-chan."

"Hehe, that makes me happy."

Overcome with sudden emotion, I hugged Shion-san.

Shion-san gently stroked my hair, like she was comforting a child.

... if this feels the best in the world to me, can I still go back?

Mentally, I mean.

"... Onee-chan, you're unfair."

"How so?"

"You're too cool."

Like some time ago, she bumped her forehead against mine.

"Are you ready to leave?" Till on the coachman's seat asked my while yawning.

In the early morning, not many people were in front of the town gates. Only some farmers passed by.

Till had bought this carriage from the guild.

She really had money, this girl.

"Yes," I nodded, and Till pulled the bridles to give the sign to advance.

Till really can skillfully do anything, I was impressed.

I'd said my goodbyes to Uncle and Aunty.

I'd thought they'd scold me for suddenly breaking that to them so early in the morning, but I'd been wrong.

Apparently Aunty had somehow found out I'd go on a trip, so she'd even gotten me a coat, a change of clothes and a new Leather Robe.

She still wasn't in normal condition, but she'd already sewn those for me. Her powers of observation were amazing.

There's a limit to how much you should surprise people

I cried a little.

Uncle... he on the other hand cried rivers.

His snot ran, too.

It was a bit disgusting.

Seeing a man of such a good age cry himself to pieces does have something taxing...

But I really am grateful to him.

He's the very first person who taught me the ropes for living in this world.

I told them they didn't have to see me off. Otherwise I'd never be able to leave.

If they had in fact seen me off, my tears might not have stopped.

"——Alice-sama."

"Hm?"

The girl next to me on the carriage's load tray as I watched the town grow smaller called out to me.

I turned around to her and found myself reflected in her clear, emerald eyes.

Her fluffy, fluttering blond hair was radiant in the morning sun.

"In place of your sister, I shall protect you, Alice-sama."

"Yep... because you're strong, Ilya, I have high hopes for you."



This was the extravagance I allowed myself in this town.

No, because I bought what I wanted for a price I acknowledged, you might not call it extravagant?

"Yes, this body is Alice-sama's shield. I shall flawlessly protect Milady from all trials and tribulations."

In fact, this girl is still full of things I don't know about her.

Not that I doubt her, but her loyalty to me is a mystery.

"...hey, Ilya?"

"Yes."

I looked into her eyes that had taken a somewhat gloomy expression."

"Make sure to protect yourself, too, okay? Ehm... that's an order."

She had expressed that pure desire to live to me, so I think I might not have needed to say it though.

"——Yes, *Milady*."

Ilya had set on to say something but swallowed her words and instead gave that stiff reply.

Behind us, on the coachman's seat, Till let out a big yawn.

Ahh, all things considered, this is a nice weather.

I lay down on the load tray. The sky above was endlessly blue.

# Credits

Author	—	Seto Yuuichi
Publication platform	—	<a href="https://syosetu.com">syosetu.com</a>
Translator	—	Kadi
Translation hosted at	—	<a href="https://krytykal.org">krytykal.org</a>
Cover image	—	雷山 (Raizan?) of ジークンソフト (G-Kun Soft?)
Book designer	—	MatKrulli

# Table of Contents

[Cover](#)  
[Chapter 1](#)  
[Chapter 2](#)  
[Chapter 3](#)  
[Chapter 4](#)  
[Chapter 5](#)  
[Chapter 6](#)  
[Chapter 7](#)  
[Chapter 8](#)  
[Chapter 9](#)  
[Chapter 10](#)  
[Chapter 11](#)  
[Chapter 12](#)  
[Chapter 13](#)  
[Chapter 14](#)  
[Chapter 15](#)  
[Chapter 16](#)  
[Chapter 17](#)  
[Chapter 18](#)  
[Chapter 19](#)  
[Chapter 20](#)  
[Chapter 21](#)  
[Chapter 22](#)  
[Credits](#)

---

# Alice Tale - Arc 1

by Seto Yuuichi

---

